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THINK IT ●UT

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

FOUNDATIONS OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR AND
COMPOSITION
THE STRUCTURE OF ENGLISH

THINK IT OUT

A Course in Criticism and Composition

by

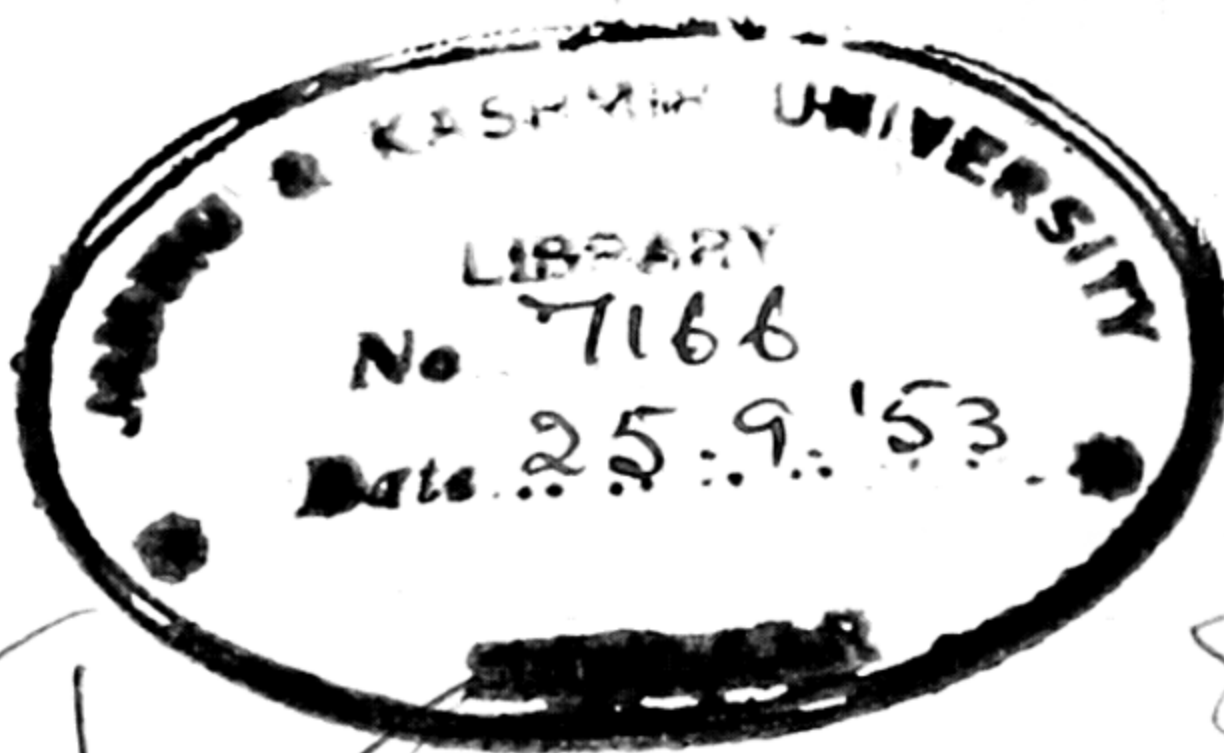
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PREFACE

THE pupil nearing School Certificate standard should be self-reliant. By reading prose and poetry intelligently he should be able to express his own opinions. If these are honest and the result of careful thought, he has learnt the elements of criticism. If, in addition, his opinions are expressed in well-chosen words, he has learnt the elements of style.

This book aims at helping the pupil to think things out for himself—to observe, to compare, to estimate. For this reason passages of moderate length and varied interest form the basis of many exercises. By studying the technique of the different writers and by imitating the best, the pupil will also achieve a style of his own.

HIGHGATE, 1937

J. D. S.

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To Messrs. James B. Pinker & Son and Messrs. A. P. Watt & Son I owe a debt of gratitude for their kindly response to my many demands on their time.

Despite careful inquiry, I have been unable to trace one or two owners of copyright. I hope that these, and any whose rights have escaped my notice, will forgive me.

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Whereto serveth learning, if understanding be not joined to it?

MONTAIGNE

CHAPTER I

BORROWERS OR BURROWERS?

IN the year 1871 a disastrous fire broke out in Chicago. Two hundred and seventy people lost their lives, and damage to the extent of £60,000 was done. It is said that the fire began in a cow-shed, when a restless cow kicked over an oil-stove. No doubt the person who put the oil-stove there 'never thought there would be a fire'.

Alarm of a different kind roused Mr. Tulliver (a character in George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*) when he heard his small daughter talking excitedly of the devil, about whom she had been reading in a book taken from the family book-shelf. Questioned about the wisdom of keeping such books, Mr. Tulliver explained to his friend that at a sale he had bought some books, all bound alike. One was Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living and Holy Dying*: another proved to be Defoe's *History of the Devil*. 'They've all got the same covers,' said Mr. Tulliver, 'and I thought they were all o' one sample, as you may say. But it seems one mustn't judge by th' outside. This is a puzzlin' world.'

As the troubles of the world are largely due to those of us who never thought it would do any harm, and those who thought it would be all right, the sooner we all begin to understand the meaning of the word THINK, the better. The Pocket Oxford Dictionary gives this as the first meaning:

HAVE ONE'S MIND AT WORK.

This is just what many of us never do. We take things for granted, we borrow the ideas of others, and when

trouble arises from our own carelessness we are apt to blame some one else. For example, we are all inclined to accept unquestioningly what we see in print ; yet the proprietor of a newspaper rarely attempts to present nothing but the truth, and the writer of a book is only human and therefore likely to make mistakes. You can prove this for yourself by comparing accounts of the same affair in different newspapers : this will soon show how foolish it is to rely on press information.

As for writers, consider for a moment how easy it is to be at fault. In her interesting and instructive *Aspects of Modern Poetry* Miss Edith Sitwell has much to say about Gerard Manley Hopkins, referring, among other things, to his poem entitled *The May Magnificent*. Actually the title is *The May Magnificat*, which conveys much more clearly the deeply religious emotion underlying the poem.

Mistakes of another kind are made by Miss Ethel Mannin in the novel entitled *Green Willow*. In one chapter Miss Mannin gives the reader to understand that the events which she describes take place in August. John Harran and his daughter, Lynette, are invited to lunch by Mr. and Mrs. Byrne. Mr. Byrne offers to show Lynette the garden. Before they go Mrs. Byrne warns her husband not to let Lynette make herself sick at the strawberry-bed. A week or two later Lynette and Mr. Byrne walk through Richmond Park. As they turn a corner they come unexpectedly upon a mass of rhododendrons in full bloom.

If experienced writers make mistakes, it is not to be doubted that you and I are likely to do so. Still, our aim should be to think things out carefully. What we see in print will often serve as a test of our ability to do this. You have probably come across the type of exercise in which various inaccurate sentences are set for correction. These will serve at the outset to sharpen your wits, and we cannot do better than begin with a few examples. All have appeared in print.

EXERCISE I

Point out the inaccuracies in the following sentences :

(a) Joe heard the news that he was to be a grocer's boy without moving a muscle.

(ELEANOR SMITH : *Red Wagon*)

(b) 'What would you call the reverse of an eclipse, Denis? Anti-eclipse? That sounds rather barbaric to my ears. One should never mix Greek and Latin, if it can possibly be avoided.'

(NORMAN DOUGLAS : *South Wind*)

(c) He came upon a cart filled with pigs which had broken down.

(GEORGE MOORE : *The Lake*)

(d) Several cases of food poisoning have been traced to the consumption of nut meat brawn sold by a London firm since the middle of July. Any one having in their possession a supply of this product is requested to forward it to the Ministry of Health, stating their name and address and where and when the food was purchased.

(Official warning published in daily papers, 14 August, 1935)

(e) She went after dinner to show her ring and boast of being married to Mrs. Hill and the two housemaids.

(JANE AUSTEN : *Pride and Prejudice*)

(f) Fortunately the English were short of shells. They had to be economical and only indulged in desultory fire. All the same, they had some four-point-twos and a battery of naval guns in the ruins of Ypres, and sent over heavy stuff at odd moments of the day and night.

(PHILIP GIBBS : *Blood Relations*)

(g) Mercutio, in *The Merchant of Venice*, seemed to him typical of modern young Englishmen. He made a joke even of his death wound.

(*Ibid.*)

(h) The boys which build of model aeroplane for the first time, does you build this most simple and best flying aeroplane, but it is a little, and let fly high up in the air to the full. 'R.O.G.' is omission of Rising Of Ground.

First of all, you must understand how to build, and does you start learn the knack of all construction.

(Extract from instructions enclosed with a toy)

(i) Judging from our past history we shall resist any attack ^x that may be made upon us with success.

(SIR SAMUEL HOARE : reported in *The News Chronicle*)

(j) Women should leave their knitting on their husband's chair and so interest them in their work of providing clothes, for no man can stand against needles in the place he sits on.

(LADY READING : reported *ibid.*)

(k) Just as the physicist or mathematician show us deeper aspects of matter or of space . . . so poets, philosophers, and historians have the power of revealing new values.

(BOARD OF EDUCATION : *The Teaching of English in England*)

(l) I am not one of those who wants to make a mumbo-jumbo about things.

(SIR JOHN SQUIRE : critical article in the *Daily Telegraph*)

(m) Hardly had Shakespeare 'drowned his book' than Milton was learning to read.

(MR. GUY BOAS : preface to annotated edition of Milton)

(n) The Lark now leaves his watery nest,
And climbing, shakes his dewy wings ;
He takes this window for the East,
And to implore your light he sings.
Awake ! awake ! the morn will never rise
Till she can dress your beauty at her eyes.

(DAVENANT : as printed in *Lyrists of the Restoration*)

EXERCISE 2

Discussing the correct use of 'not only . . . but also' in 'The English Way', Dr. B. L. K. Henderson gives these examples of

(a) accuracy and (b) inaccuracy :

(a) William was not only a good general, but also a firm ruler.

(b) Mr. Webb was not only a good book-keeper, but also a competent organizer.

If you were reading Dr. Henderson's book, would you pass over these examples without comment?

And what would be your comment on the following examples taken from the same book?

(c) Caesar was made *Emperor* : nominative complement to a verb of incomplete predication. (p. 19)

Mr. Brown was made by them *chairman* of their society. Retained accusative. (p. 23)

(d) To *Imagination* things, seemingly most diverse, present themselves as interrelated, and subject to the same emotions and laws. Thus when we read that—

‘All the morning stars shouted for joy!’

we feel that the religious *Imagination* visualizes all things as part of a single Creator, and, therefore, severally partaking of the nature of all created things. . . . It was *Fancy*, not *Imagination*, that made Keats write of sweet-peas as ‘butterflies a tip-toe for a flight’. (pp. 262–3)

(N.B.—To correct example (d), look up Job xxxviii. 1–7, and Keats's poem beginning ‘I stood tip-toe upon a little hill’.)

EXERCISE 3

Every improvement of the means of locomotion benefits mankind morally and intellectually as well as materially, and not only facilitates the interchange of the various productions of nature and art, but tends to remove national and provincial antipathies, and to bind together all the branches of the great human family.

(MACAULAY : *History of England*)

Macaulay is obviously wrong. But was Ruskin necessarily right in abusing railroads and ‘looking always hopefully forward to the day when their embankments will be ploughed down again, like the camps of Rome, into our English fields’? Think it out carefully and express your thoughts in a page or so of well-chosen words.

EXERCISE 4

Examine the following, both of which appeared in the ‘Daily Telegraph’, on March 10, 1933 :

(a) All three Defence Estimates for the coming year are now before the public. They amount to a total of £105,852,000, of which the Navy accounts for £50,476,000, or almost exactly half. The combined Estimates represent an increase of £4,581,700 over those of 1932-33.

(b) Estimates for the coming year, compared with those presented twelve months ago, are :

	1933	1932
Navy	£53,570,000	£50,476,000
Army	£37,950,000	£36,488,000
Air	£17,426,000	£17,400,000
Civil	£319,271,099	£330,210,320
Customs and Excise	£5,364,300	£5,330,200
Inland Revenue	£7,104,585	£7,299,585
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	£440,685,984	£447,204,105

EXERCISE 5

Intelligence tests are usually interesting. Here are a few well-known questions for you to answer :

(a) *A worm takes one month to go through the cover of a book, and one week to go through each inch of pages. On a shelf there are two volumes standing side by side : each volume is two inches thick, excluding the covers. How long will the worm take to go from the first page of Volume 1 to the last page of Volume 2 ?*

(b) *There were three mothers. Each had two daughters. All went away together to the seaside, but found that there were only seven beds available in the hotel. Each insisted on a bed to herself, and got it. How ?*

(c) *When a train is travelling forwards, can any part of it be moving backwards ?*

(d) *An Arab left half his property to one son, a third to another, and a ninth to another. He died possessed of seventeen horses. While the sons were wondering how to dispose of the horses as their father had directed, an old Arab rode up. Hearing of their difficulty, he offered an easy solution. 'If I lend you my horse,' he said, 'you will have eighteen. Half eighteen—nine ; a third of eighteen—six ; a ninth of eighteen—two. Nine and six and*

two make seventeen ; so I can now have my own horse back again.' Was the problem really solved?

(e) *What happens when an irresistible force meets an immovable object?*

(f) *Two players, A and B, are seated at a round table. In a box there is an unlimited supply of cigars. Each in turn has to place a cigar on the table, the loser being the player who first has to place a cigar in contact with another one. If A plays first, how can he ensure that B loses?*

EXERCISE 6

The following are extracts from a builder's brochure. Comment on the English :

The concrete foundations and also the surface concrete is composed of pure stone ballast in Portland cement and Not coke breeze which is so often used. The dampcourse is composed of a double course of slates laid in cement and not felt, a very important feature in any house. The brickwork is wholly composed of English made bricks and it will be noted that the high quality is not only maintained in the front elevation but on all sides including fence walls, particular attention is directed to the method of construction of the Bay windows, the frames of which are all bedded on sheet lead aprons for the full length and width, the brickwork of these bays are first covered with waterproof material, over the whole area, and then expanded steel is fixed and finally two coats of strongly guaged cement and sand is rendered over this. The sheet lead apron mentioned above then being dressed over, thus effectually eliminating any risk of dampness penetrating into rooms as so often happens, much to the annoyance and inconvenience of the Occupier. The roof tiles are a first quality hand made English tile properly fixed by Specialists for this class of work. . . . A sentry boiler is fitted to the Kitchen, which supplies the Hot water to Bath and Scullery sink and heats the garage, the flue to this boiler has been constructed so that the sweeping thereof can be done from the outside thus avoiding the inconvenience which this operation entails when the sweeping has to be done from the inside of the House.

The Bathroom is fitted with a porcelain enamel bath and pedestal lavatory basin, the bath being enclosed with polished

marble $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick, which is easily removed to obtain access to pipes (should the same be necessary) there is also a radiator chromium plated towel rail and airer which is connected to the hot water pipes. The mantels to back and front rooms may be selected by the Purchaser, as may all mantels to other rooms and every fireplace is fitted with gas pipes in order that they may be used as gas fires should the Purchaser so desire. . . .

Particular attention is directed to the sizes of the rooms, especially the First Floor Back and Third Bedroom, which are often cramped and much smaller than other rooms in similar houses.

(N.B.—Spelling and punctuation appear as in the original.)

CHAPTER II

PROSE AND VERSE FORMS

M. JOURDAIN, a character in Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, longed to be a gentleman ; so when he became rich he engaged three instructors to teach him how to conduct himself as a gentleman ought. From the instructor in philosophy he learned delightedly that he had been speaking prose all his life without knowing it.

What is prose? Have you ever thought about it? The Latin words for it are *oratio soluta*, which mean *freed speech*. Speech freed from what? The first answer that suggests itself is, 'Freed from the regular grouping of syllables according to some pattern, which we call metre.' For example :

Prose

A CRICKET BOWLER

There is a rest of two minutes till the next man goes in. The bowler, a boy, rests his tired arms on the grass, relaxing every sinew in his supple back and in those elbows that can make the ball spin up the bat, if one is not quick, or round the shins, if one is not wary. He is cunning and deceptive, but there is no guile in him really : he is an honest English lad with dark crisp hair, frank eyes and fresh complexion.

The two minutes are over. The next man in, conscious of his reputation, places his bat with the care of a practised cricketer not afraid of any tricks. After his rest the boy gladly resumes the game. The ball makes one wild bound and the middle stump turns three somersaults.

Verse

Two minutes' rest till the next man goes in !
 The tired arms lie with every sinew slack
 On the mown grass. Unbent the supple back,
 And elbows apt to make the leather spin
 Up the slow bat and round the unwary shin,—
 In knavish hands a most unkindly knack ;
 But no guile shelters under this boy's black
 Crisp hair, frank eyes, and honest English skin.

Two minutes only. Conscious of a name,
 The new man plants his weapon with profound
 Long-practised skill that no mere trick may scare.
 Not loth, the rested lad resumes the game :
 The flung ball takes one madding tortuous bound,
 And the mid-stump three somersaults in air.

(E. C. LEFROY)

In the verse passage you will notice the following things :

- (i) Most of the lines contain ten syllables, but there are eleven in the fifth and thirteenth lines.
- (ii) The rhythmic pattern of the lines is mainly an alternation of unaccented and accented syllables, e.g. :

| Not loth | the rest|ed boy | resumes | the game. |

But this pattern is often varied, e.g. :

| Two min|utes' rest | till the | next man | goes in. |

- (iii) The lines are arranged in two groups, of eight and six.
- (iv) The rhymes are arranged in this way : lines 1, 4, 5, 8 ; 2, 3, 6, 7 ; 9, 12 ; 10, 13 ; 11, 14.

It is clear that in these two examples, although the subject-matter is the same, the form of expression is different. It is therefore form which distinguishes verse from prose. There are many of these forms, and each is differentiated

in three or four ways, namely, number of syllables to the line, grouping of the accents, grouping of the lines, and arrangement of the rhymes. This last does not apply to some compositions in verse : in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, for instance, there are no rhymes.

Early verse forms tend to be rather loose. In the old ballads, for example, you will find that whereas the accents or beats are fairly regular, the number of syllables in each line varies greatly. A glance at *Adam Bell*, *Clym of the Clough*, and *William of Cloudesley* will illustrate this. This poem recounts the adventures of three outlaws, William being a famous archer. After being condemned to death by the king, but reprieved on the intercession of the queen, the three gave an exhibition of their shooting ; William split a hazel wand four hundred paces away.

‘Thou art the best archer,’ then said the Kynge,
‘Forsothe that ever I se.’—

‘And yet for your love,’ sayd Wyllyam,
‘I wyll do more maystery.

‘I have a sonne is seven yere olde,
He is to me full deare ;
I wyll hym tye unto a stake :
All shall se, that be here ;

‘And lay an apple upon hys head,
And go syxe score paces hym fro,
And I myselfe with a brode arow
Shall cleve the apple in two.’

‘Now hastè the,’ then sayd the Kynge,
‘By hym that dyed on a tre,
But yf thou do not, as thou hest sayde,
Hangèd thou shalt be.

‘An thou touch hys head or gowne
In syght that men may se,
By all the sayntes that be in heaven,
I shall hange you all three.’

‘That have I promised,’ said Wylliam,
 ‘That I wyll never forsake.’
 And there even before the Kynge,
 In the earth he drove a stake ;

And bound therto his eldest sonne,
 And bad hym stand styll thereat ;
 And turned the childè’s face him fro,
 Because he should not start.

An apple upon his head he set,
 And then hys bowe he bent ;
 Syxe score paces they were out-met,
 And thether Cloudesley went.

There he drewe out a fayr brode arow,
 —Hys bowe was great and longe,—
 He set that arrowe in hys bowe,
 That was both styffe and stronge.

He prayed the people that was there
 That they all styll would stand,
 ‘For he that shoteth for such a wager
 Behoveth a stedfast hand.’

Muche people prayed for Cloudesley,
 That hys lyfe savèd myght be,
 And whan he made hym redy to shote,
 There was many a weeping e’e.

But Cloudesley cleftè the apple in two,
 That many a man it se ;
 ‘Over God’s forbode,’ sayde the Kynge,
 ‘That thou shold shote at me !’

Contrast this with the syllabic regularity of a ballad
 written by Goldsmith three hundred years later :

Good people all of every sort,
 Give ear unto my song ;
 And if you find it wondrous short,—
 It cannot hold you long.

In Islington there dwelt a man
Of whom the world might say
That still a godly race he ran,—
Whene'er he went to pray.

A kind and gentle heart he had
To comfort friends and foes ;
The naked every day he clad,—
When he put on his clothes.

And in that town a dog was found,
As many dogs there be,
Both mongrel, puppy, whelp and hound
And curs of low degree.

This dog and man at first were friends ;
But when a pique began,
The dog, to gain his private ends,
Went mad, and bit the man.

Around from all the neighbouring streets
The wondering neighbours ran,
And swore the dog had lost his wits
To bite so good a man.

The wound it seem'd both sore and sad
To every Christian eye ;
And, while they swore the dog was mad,
They swore the man would die.

But soon a wonder came to light,
That show'd the rogues they lied ;
The man recover'd of the bite,
The dog it was that died.

Despite the regularity of Goldsmith's poem, you will observe that there are variations similar to those in *A Cricket Bowler* ; true, there are fewer, but they are none the less noticeable. The reason for these variations is obvious : if the writer adhered strictly to one pattern, the verse would become monotonous, and so he claims to vary the

pattern as he thinks fit, whether this affects the grouping of the accents, the number of syllables in the line, or even the grouping of the lines. Bear this in mind when you work the first exercise, which will deal with the more common rhythmic patterns used in verse. To discuss all the verse forms would be impossible in this book : you should consult a book on prosody some time. Meanwhile, turn your attention to

EXERCISE I

Each group of syllables in a line is called a foot. For example, there are four feet in this line :

To Mer|cy, Pit|y, Peace | and Love.

A foot may contain two, three or occasionally four syllables. We shall mention the last kind later, and deal here only with disyllabic and trisyllabic feet. There are various kinds of these feet, for it is obviously possible to arrange accented and unaccented syllables in different ways. To each arrangement a name is given ; and from the following examples you must decide for yourself what constitutes each foot :

IAMB, producing iambic rhythm :

To Mer|cy, Pit|y, Peace | and Love
All pray in their distress,
And to these virtues of delight
Return their thankfulness.

- (i) *Is each foot in the stanza an iamb ?*
- (ii) *Pick out the iambs in the following :*

The years like great black oxen tread the world
And God the herdsman goads them on behind
And I am broken by their passing feet.

(W. B. YEATS : *The Countess Cathleen*)

- (iii) *Arrange the following in three lines of five feet each, without altering the order of the words :*

The jest of rogues, an instrumental ass for villains to lay loads of shame upon, and drive about just for their ease and scorn.

How many of the feet are iambs? Write three iambic lines continuing this description.

* * *

TROCHEE, *producing trochaic rhythm* :

Though my | many | faults de|faced me,
 Could no other arm be found
 Than the one which once embraced me
 To inflict a cureless wound?

- (i) *Pick out the trochees in the second, third and fourth lines.*
- (ii) *How many complete trochees are there in the stanza?*
- (iii) *How many are there in the following?*

Life is mostly froth and bubble,
 Two things stand like stone,
 Kindness in another's trouble,
 Courage in your own.

(ADAM LINDSAY GORDON)

- (iv) *What do you notice about the even lines in both stanzas?*
- (v) *Write four lines in trochaic rhythm about a forest fire.*

* * *

ANAPAEST, *producing anapaestic rhythm* :

It is not while beauty and youth are thine own,
 And thy cheeks | unprofaned | by a tear,
 That the fervour and faith of a soul can be known,
 To which time will but make thee more dear.

- (i) *Scan the third and fourth lines.*
- (ii) *What do you notice about the first foot of the first line?*
- (iii) *How many feet in the following are not anapaests? Which are they?*

The poplars are felled, farewell to the shade,
 And the whispering sound of the cool colonnade;
 The winds play no longer and sing in the leaves,
 Nor Ouse on his bosom their image receives.

(COWPER : *The Poplar Field*)

(iv) *For what subject matter do you think anapaestic rhythm most suitable? Cowper has been adversely criticized for using it in 'The Poplar Field'. Read this poem, and then compare it with a poem like 'Lochinvar'.*

(v) *Write some anapaestic lines on the subject of galloping horses, an avalanche, or the circus.*

* * *

DACTYL, *producing dactylic rhythm :*

Here's to the | maiden of | bashful fif|teen,
Here's to the widow of fifty,
Here's to the flaunting extravagant quean,
And here's to the housewife that's thrifty.

(i) *Is there any similarity between anapaestic and dactylic rhythm?*

(ii) *Is dactylic rhythm suitable for sombre subjects? Read 'The Bridge of Sighs', by Hood, to check your answer.*

(iii) *For what subjects do you think dactylic rhythm most suitable?*

(iv) *Pick out the dactyls in the following :*

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volley'd and thunder'd.

(v) *Write four or five lines in dactylic rhythm on the subject of the fire-engine.*

* * *

SPONDEE, *producing spondaic rhythm :*

O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp

Rocks, caves, | lakes, fens, | bogs, dens | and shades | of death.

(i) *What would be the effect of a poem entirely in spondaic rhythm?*

(ii) *Pick out the spondees in the following :*

When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,
The line too labours, and the words move slow.

- (iii) Find some other examples of this rhythm.
- (iv) Write two lines in spondaic rhythm describing men straining at a rope.

* * *

AMPHIBRACH, producing amphibrachic rhythm :

There chiefly | I sought thee, | there only | I found thee ;
Her glance was the best of the rays that surround thee ;
When it sparkled o'er aught that was bright in my story,
I knew it was love, and I felt it was glory.

- (i) Scan the second and fourth lines.
- (ii) What do you notice about the first foot in the third line?
- (iii) Arrange the following as four lines, rhyming alternately. Only the order of the words may be changed, and the rhythm must be amphibrachic :

Though he wrestle thou shalt blind his bright eyes, though he
strive thou shalt chain his light limbs ; all thy serpents shall nestle
in his lips, all thy cruelties thrive in his hands.

- (iv) Write two lines in this rhythm on the subject of regret.

* * *

We are agreed, I hope, that form differentiates verse from prose. Why is it that passages in verse are so often more memorable than passages in prose? Sometimes there is no doubt that the writer's words achieve this distinction, and his unique choice gives pleasure to us when we read 'what oft was thought but ne'er so well expressed'. It is in this way that Pope often delights his readers. In a couplet he can flash upon the mind a vivid picture, as, for example, when he presents to us

The bookful blockhead, ignorantly read,
With loads of learned lumber in his head.

On the other hand he can pen, also in a couplet, what Ruskin has called 'the most complete, the most concise, and the most lofty expression of moral temper existing in English words' :

Never elated, while one man's oppress'd ;
Never dejected, while another's blest.

Another poet may paint a vivid picture in a few lines, as when Shakespeare writes :

Look, love, what envious streaks
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east :
Night's candles are burnt out and jocund day
Stands tip-toe on the misty mountain tops.

Another may surprise us by the rare beauty of a comparison, as Shelley does when he says in *Adonais* :

Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments.

Sometimes the poet's meaning is obscure. In *The Mother of God* Mr. Yeats writes as follows :

The three-fold terror of love ; a fallen flare
Through the hollow of an ear ;
Wings beating about the room ;
The terror of all terrors that I bore
The Heavens in my womb.

He explains that the words *a fallen flare through the hollow of an ear* were due to his recollection of Byzantine mosaics picturing the Annunciation : these mosaics 'show a line drawn from a star to the ear of the Virgin. She received the Word through the ear, a star fell, and a star was born.'

Sometimes the writer of verse will use words in as straightforward a way as the writer of prose ; and he may be much more successful when he writes thus. No doubt Tennyson impresses us with his cleverness when in *The Princess*, describing a starlight night, he says :

Now lies the earth all Danaë to the stars.

But we shall not be much the wiser, unless we have read the fable he had in mind : how Acrisius confined his daughter in a tower, where she was visited by Zeus, who came down from the sky in a shower of gold. In contrast

with this, Tennyson can be effectively simple. Many examples are to be found : the one that follows is taken from *In Memoriam*, a long poem in which Tennyson expresses his sorrow, his doubts and his hopes after the death of an intimate friend, A. H. Hallam :

I hold it true whate'er befall ;
I feel it when I sorrow most ;
'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

But for three words, *whate'er*, *befall*, *'tis*, the thought is expressed with all the simplicity of prose.

Wordsworth even went so far as to say, ' There neither is, nor can be, any essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition.' That is a sweeping assertion which is often refuted by his own practice ; but it serves to remind us how dangerous it is to suppose that verse depends for its effect on words not normally used in prose.

Perhaps Coleridge can help us to discover why verse is sometimes more memorable than prose. In *Biographia Literaria* he states : ' Metre in itself is simply a stimulant of the attention, and therefore excites the question, Why is the attention to be thus stimulated ? ' If that is so, the writer of verse succeeds in impressing his reader whenever the latter feels that he has been roused by something worthy of his consideration. The understanding and appreciation of verse demand an effort from the reader no less than inspiration from the writer. If one or the other fails, the result is negative. The call of the writer and the response of the reader—these two to some extent determine whether a piece of verse is great or not.

Let us glance at two examples to illustrate what we have been discussing. Sir Ronald Ross, a famous scientist, devoted his life to discovering the cause of malaria. On August 21, 1897, the secret was revealed to him, and he commemorated his discovery in these lines :

This day relenting God
 Hath placed within my hand
 A wondrous thing : and God
 Be praised. At His command,
 Seeking His secret deeds
 With tears and toiling breath,
 I find thy cunning seeds,
 O million murdering death.

The writer's sincerity is evident. For him the discovery is deeply significant, and he invites the reader to share in his thankfulness to God for the revelation. The words are befittingly simple and the form compact.

Now for the second example.

Of onions middle-sized do thou take three,
 One pound of tripe, and milk (a breakfast cup) ;
 One ounce of flour, some salt, and let there be
 Pepper to taste. Now stew the first three up
 Till tender. Take out tripe : the milk with flour thicken:
 Pour over : serve up hot. A good dish and a quick 'un.

Why does that sound ridiculous ? Surely it is because we have been roused to an expectation that has been disappointed. All we want to know about this homely dish is how to prepare it, and we should be more satisfied with the simple instructions given in any cookery book.

Metre confers a dignity and grace upon words, for it implies that the writer has thought it worth while to choose them very carefully and assign to each its most effective position in the line. There is an exciting story to be told, a rousing act of courage to be recounted, a vivid glimpse of beauty to be pictured or perhaps a personal emotion, such as that of Sir Ronald Ross, to be communicated to others. Verse provides an excellent medium for such expression, with its languor or rapidity of pulse, its pleasing syllabic patterns, its subtle sound effects, at the end of the line and elsewhere, its power of compression, enabling the writer to convey more vividly in six words an idea demanding sixteen from the prose-writer. If such a dignity and grace are conferred upon words by metre,

no wonder we laugh at the Recipe for Tripe and Onions : a man might as well try to plough with the Derby winner, or charter a racing yacht for day-trips to Southend. The Recipe is undoubtedly bad verse.

* * *

So far we have avoided using the term 'poetry' in our discussion—and for a very good reason. Critics from Aristotle's day have tried to define poetry, but with only partial success. Their theories are rarely simple and often contradictory. You see, it is easy to distinguish verse form from prose form ; but no one has yet been able to explain in set terms the spirit which gives light and life to the words of the poet. The theologians might as well try to reduce faith to a scientific formula. Mere study of the form will not help us to decide what is poetry and what is not, for its animating spirit can appear in a passage of prose just as memorably as in a verse passage :

Ask where that iron is that is ground off a knife or axe. Ask that marble that is worn off the threshold in the church-porch by continual treading, and with that iron and with that marble thou mayest find thy father's skin and body. Contrita sunt. The knife, the marble, the skin, the body are ground away, trod away, they are destroyed. Who knows the revolutions of dust ? Dust upon the king's highway and dust upon the king's grave are both, or neither, Dust Royal, and may change places. Who knows the revolutions of dust ?

(DONNE : *Sermon Preached at Lincoln's Inn*)

There you have the poet speaking, although the form is prose. Yet that same poet only makes the reader smile at a passage of verse in which he gives this description of two fond lovers holding hands :

Our hands were firmly cemented
By a fast balm which thence did spring ;
Our eye-beams twisted, and did thread
Our eyes upon one double string.

The prose passage is a moving reminder of man's mortality : the verse passage suggests nothing so much as an

admirable theme for a comic cartoon. Can you find out for yourself why this is so? If you can, you will be nearer to understanding what poetry is than you ever will be from reading volumes of criticism. Of course, you must one day come to grips with this problem of finding out what the critics mean, and you may be amused to note the vigour with which they challenge each other's statements. If you are sufficiently interested to want an introduction to the problem at once, you could not do better than read *Poetry : Its Music and Meaning*, by Lascelles Abercrombie, himself a poet as well as a professor. The book is short and readable. A little longer, but equally readable, is *The Discovery of Poetry*, by P. H. B. Lyon.

Meanwhile, keep in mind what has been said about verse form and prose form.

EXERCISE 2

Study the following passages :

- (a) Night comes ; from fens where blind grey castles frown
 A veiled moon ventures on the cavernous sky.
 No stir, no tassel-tremble on the down :
 Mood dims to nothing : atom-like I lie
 Where nightjars burr and barking fox steps by
 And hedgehogs talk and play in glimmering brown ;
 Passions in such night drown,
 Nor tell me I am I. (EDMUND BLUNDEN : *Cloudy June*)

- (b) Four ducks on a pond,
 A grass bank beyond,
 A blue sky of spring,
 White clouds on the wing :
 What a little thing
 To remember for years—
 To remember with tears.

(WILLIAM ALLINGHAM)

- (c) How charming, would he think, to see her there,
 How heightened then and perfect would appear
 The two divinest things the world has got,
 A lovely woman in a rural spot.

(LEIGH HUNT : *Rimini*)

- (d) I saw old Autumn in the misty morn
Stand shadowless like Silence, listening
To silence, for no lonely bird would sing
Into his hollow ear from woods forlorn,
Nor lowly hedge nor solitary thorn :—
Shaking his languid locks all dewy bright
With tangled gossamer that fell by night,
Pearling his coronet of golden corn.

(THOMAS HOOD : *Autumn*)

- (e) Even such is Time, that takes in trust
Our youth, our joys, our all we have,
And pays us but with earth and dust ;
Who in the dark and silent grave,
When we have wandered all our ways,
Shuts up the story of our days ;
But from this earth, this grave, this dust,
My God shall raise me up, I trust.

(SIR WALTER RALEIGH)

- (f) Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now of my threescore years and ten,
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a score,
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.

(A. E. HOUSMAN : *A Shropshire Lad*)

- (g) The point of one white star is quivering still
Deep in the orange light of widening morn
Beyond the purple mountains : through a chasm
Of wind-divided mist the darker lake
Reflects it : now it wanes : it gleams again
As the waves fade, and as the burning threads

Of woven cloud unravel in pale air :
 'Tis lost ! and through yon peaks of cloud-like snow
 The roseate sunlight quivers.

(SHELLEY : *Prometheus Unbound*)

- (h) Early in the morning off to Brighton,
 See the little puff-puffs standing in a row.
 Daddy on the engine pulls a little lever :
 Pip ! pip ! sh ! sh ! off we go.

Answer these questions about each passage :

- (i) *Do you like or dislike it ? Or are you indifferent ? Give your reasons.*
 (ii) *Does the idea justify expression in verse form ? Does it gain in effect by being so expressed ? Is it worth expressing at all ?*
 (iii) *Is rhyme necessary to secure a good effect ? Is rhyme helpful ?*
 (iv) *Does the passage tell you anything about the author ?*
 (v) *Do colour and sound contribute to the effect ?*
 (vi) *Would it gain or lose by being expressed in prose form ?*

EXERCISE 3

Keats provides many an interesting example of the poet's search for the right word to convey precisely what is in his mind. The following passage reveals the difficulty experienced before he was satisfied with a description of the remote valley in which Saturn mourned his defeat. He wished to suggest the almost oppressive peacefulness of the scene, and put down the various readings here reproduced. Select what you consider to be the most effective. The final version should contain five lines.

Forest on forest hung about his head
 Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was there,
 { Not so much life as { a young vulture's wing
 { what an eagle's wing
 { Would spread upon a field of green-ear'd corn :
 { Not so much life as on a summer's day
 or/ { Robs not { at all the dandelion's fleece
 { one light seed from the feather'd grass,
 But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.

Here is another passage from the same poem. Choose your final version, which should contain seven and a half lines :

As when upon a tranced summer night
 Those green-robed senators of mighty woods
 { The oaks, stand charmed by the earnest stars
 And thus all night without a stir they rest,
 or/ { Tall oaks, branch charmed by the earnest stars,
 Dream, and so dream all night without a stir,
 Save from one { sudden momentary } gust
 { gradual solitary }
 Which comes upon the silence, and dies off
 As if the { sea of air } had but one wave ;
 { ebbing air }
 So came these words and went.

EXERCISE 4

(a)

Let us be off. Our steam
 Is deafening the dome.
 The needle in the gauge
 Points to a long-banked rage
 And trembles there to show
 What a pressure's below.
 Valve cannot vent the strain
 Nor iron ribs refrain
 That furnace in the heart.
 Come on, make haste and start
 Coupling-rod and wheel,
 Welded of patient steel,
 Piston that will not stir
 Beyond the cylinder
 To take in its stride
 A teeming countryside.
 (CECIL DAY LEWIS : *The Magnetic Mountain*)

(b)

With three great snorts of strength,
 Stretching my mighty length,
 Like some great dragon stirring in his sleep,
 Out from the glare of gas
 Into the night I pass,
 And plunge alone into the silence deep.

Little I know or care
 What be the load I bear,
 Why thus compell'd? I seek not to divine;
 At man's command I stir,
 I, his stern messenger!
 Does he do his duty well as I do mine?

Straight on my silent road,
 Flank'd by no man's abode,
 No foe I parley with, no friend I greet;
 On like a bolt I fly
 Under the starry sky,
 Scorning the current of the sluggish street.

(W. C. MONKHOUSE : *The Night Express*)

Answer the following questions carefully :

Do you like either, both or neither of these extracts?

Which do you think is the better? Why?

Hazlitt has said that 'every subject is a fit one for poetry provided it is poetically treated'. Apply this to the two extracts.

Is there any beauty in machinery? Or in modern buildings? Be honest in your answers.

'Paeon' is the name given to a metrical foot containing three short syllables and one long one. Does this represent the rhythm rattled out by an express train? Try to write a few lines in paeonic rhythm.

(N.B.—Here is a line in paeonic rhythm :

When I dwelt | at home in plen|ty, and my gold | did much
 abound.)

EXERCISE 5

'If the accomplishment of the deed had an air of finality about it, then speed would be the essential factor. If in the case of his murder there were no undesirable after effects, and in the event of his death I could have full assurance of success; if the delivery of a blow indicated the cessation of any further complications, then, faced as we are with merely material and temporal considerations,

we should risk the great hereafter. But in circumstances not dissimilar to the present ones we are prompted by the consideration that we are establishing a dangerous precedent relative to the policy of assassination, which may result, in the case of the person who first indulges in the practice, in his becoming involved in the same consequences. Thus by a reversal of the situation contrived by the impartiality of justice we are faced with the alternative of being brought to a dire catastrophe by our own example.'

If it were done when 't is done, then 't were well
It were done quickly : if the assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch
With his surcease success ; that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
We'd jump the life to come.—But in these cases,
We still have judgment here ; that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
To plague th' inventor : this even-handed justice
Commends th' ingredients of our poison'd chalice
To our own lips.

(*Macbeth*, Act I, Scene vii)

Why is the first passage rubbish although it pretends to give the same meaning as the extract from 'Macbeth' ?

EXERCISE 6

Compare these stanzas and then define the term parody as briefly and as accurately as you can :

(a) Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
 Old Time is still a-flying :
 And this same flower that smiles to-day
 To-morrow will be dying.

(b) Gather up doses while ye may,
 Your cold will soon be flying ;
 And this same nose that drips to-day
 To-morrow will be drying.

* * *

(a) Hail to thee, blithe spirit,
 Bird thou never wert,
 That to heaven, or near it,
 Pourest thy full heart
 In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

(b) Hail to thee, blithe spinach,
 Foul thou never wert,
 That by seven, or near it,
 Pourest thy green heart
 Through profuse strain of colander's refining art.

EXERCISE 7

Suggest originals for the following parodies : they are taken from 'Parodies, Collected by Walter Hamilton' :

(a) And all I remember, is friends flocking round,
 Who bore us both shoulder high then off the ground,
 And the club all *en masse* cheered this record of mine,
 And my health was the pretext for bumpers of wine.
 And the fellows all voted three cheers from the field,
 For the victor and vanquished, who fought for the shield.
 (W. H. SMITH : *The Wheeling Annual*, 1885)

(b) The weed was rank, the pipe was old,
 Along the road the smoker rolled ;
 His scared and hesitating way
 Showed that he owed and couldn't pay.

The pipe, his one remaining joy,
 Was scoff of every man and boy ;
 For last of all the smokers, he,
 This old man was well known to be.

(*Cope's Tobacco Plant* : April, 1875)

(c) She promised me her lily hand,
 She seemed particularly cool :
 No warning voice then whispered low,
 'Thou art a fool !'

Next day I found I lov'd her not,
 And then she wept and sigh'd full sore,
 Went to her lawyer on the spot,
 And talked it o'er.

(*The Figaro* : September 15, 1875)

(d) Lawn-Tennis was now rapidly elbowing out Archery, a thoroughly English and deep-rooted institution, and Croquet, its younger sister. Cricket was losing many of its most earnest devotees. In some parts of England there was an almost daily *rendezvous* at one or other of the great houses of the neighbourhood for the new and popular pastime. In country circles, tournaments were rousing the keenest excitement. Society was being differentiated into the good players and the bad. Crowds flocked annually to Wimbledon to watch the great match for the Championship of the world, to which a silver goblet had been added by *The Country Gentleman's Newspaper*. Masters of hounds deferred cub-hunting that the Lawn-Tennis season might be still further prolonged. A game of Lawn-Tennis was not unfrequently the innocent finish of the Ruridecanal meetings of the clergy.

(*Tennis Cuts and Quips*)

(e) 'Twas at the dinner given, the prime tuck-out,
 By Josh, the boxer stout ;
 Aloft the worthy sat,
 His corpus lin'd with fat,
 And, pleas'd, he gaz'd about :
 His jovial pals were plac'd around,
 For fancy feats and milling deeds renown'd,
 And for their fistic worth with glory crown'd.
 His blooming missus by his side,
 Smok'd like a hock of bacon fried,
 In glow of health and beauty's pride.
 Happy, happy, happy pair,
 None but the fat,
 None but the fat,
 None but the fat deserves the fair.

EXERCISE 8

O DARLING ROOM

O darling room, my heart's delight,
 Dear room, the apple of my sight,
 With thy two couches soft and white,
 There is no room so exquisite,
 No little room so warm and bright,
 Wherein to read, wherein to write.

For I the Nonnenwerth have seen,
 And Oberwinter's vineyards green,
 Musical Lurlei; and between
 The hills to Bingen have I been,
 Bingen in Darmstadt, where the Rhine
 Curves towards Mentz, a woody scene.

Yet never did there meet my sight,
 In any town, to left or right,
 A little room so exquisite,
 With two such couches, soft and white
 Nor any room so warm and bright,
 Wherein to read, wherein to write.

'We entreat our readers to note how, even in this little trifle, the singular taste and genius of Mr. — breaks forth. In such a dear little room a narrow-minded scribbler would have been content with one sofa, and that he would probably have covered with black mohair, or red cloth or a good striped chintz: how infinitely characteristic is white dimity!—'Tis as it were a type of the purity of the poet's mind. . . . We have ourselves visited these celebrated spots, and can testify in corroboration of Mr. — that we did not see in any of them anything like this little room so exquisITE.'

Are the poem and the note upon it serious, or do you think both poem and note a parody on sentimental verse and pedantic commentary respectively? Give your reasons and then turn to a volume of Tennyson to check your answer.

CHAPTER III

CLEAR THINKING

IN Chapter I you studied various examples of inaccurate writing. If writers of repute sometimes make mistakes, it is not to be wondered at that you and I do so. Still, our aim should be to achieve accuracy ; and we can succeed if we take care and are content to persevere despite setbacks.

The surest way to form habits of accuracy is to pay intelligent attention to what we read and write, and to understand at the outset the correct function of words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and groups of paragraphs.

WORDS AND PHRASES

Look up the meaning of all difficult words and phrases in a dictionary. Test your knowledge by forming sentences to illustrate the meaning. For example, there is a rarely used word which is spelt DISCRETE (not to be confused with DISCREET). Which of the following sentences enables you to discover what the word means ?

(a) There are two laws which are discrete. ✓

(b) There are two laws discrete,
Not reconciled,—

Law for man and law for thing. ✓

(EMERSON)

Suggest a meaning for ‘ *discrete* ’ and check your answer by referring to a dictionary.

In addition to knowing the meaning of words and phrases you must understand the main rules of grammar and syntax.

For this purpose you should consult an up-to-date book on the subject. There are many reliable books which, with the help of your master or mistress, will give you all the information you want.

EXERCISE I

1) Read the following passages carefully : look up all difficult words in a dictionary : construct sentences to illustrate the meaning of the words you have looked up.

(a) After careful meditation
And profound deliberation
On the various pretty projects which have just been shown,
Not a scheme in agitation
For the world's amelioration,
Has a grain of common sense in it except my own.

(PEACOCK : *Crotchet Castle*)

(b) As to Piso, his best recommendation was a cunning gravity of demeanour, concealing mere vacuity.

(FROUDE : *Caesar*)

(c) A bigoted understanding can draw a proof of attachment to the house of Hanover from a notorious zeal for the house of Stuart, and find an earnest of future loyalty in former rebellions.

(*Letters of Junius*)

(d) Dulness, insensible to the Comic, has the privilege of arousing it ; and the laying of a dull finger on matters of human life is the surest method of establishing electrical communications with a battery of laughter—where the Comic idea is prevalent.

(MEREDITH : *The Idea of Comedy*)

(e) If you think it right to differ from the times and to make a stand for any valuable point of morals, do it, however rustic, however antiquated, however pedantic it may appear : do it, not for insolence, but seriously and gravely, as a man who wore a soul of his own in his bosom and did not wait till it was breathed into him by the breath of fashion.

(SYDNEY SMITH : *On Wit*)

(f) Johnson could not brook appearing to be worsted in argument, even when he had taken the wrong side to show the force and dexterity of his talents.

(BOSWELL)

(g) An artist may be overrated, or undeservedly decried, because the public is not much accustomed to see or judge of pictures. But an actor is judged by his peers, the play-going public, and must stand or fall by his own merits or defects.

(HAZLITT : *On Patronage and Puffing*)

(h) In the second scene, Prospero's speeches, till the entrance of Ariel, contain the finest example I remember of retrospective narration for the purpose of exciting immediate interest, and putting the audience in possession of all the information necessary for the understanding of the plot.

(COLERIDGE : *Notes on Shakespeare*)

(i) We are told by some authorities that a repartee should be courteous in form, though severe in substance, and difficult either to mistake or resent.

(SIR EDWARD SULLIVAN : *The Artless Art of Repartee*)

(j) Discussing the purpose of poetry in modern life, Mr. Richard Aldington says that it is obviously not ethical. The poet does not wish to improve his readers' morals. It is mere cant to talk of the poet's 'message', and as for 'uplift', it may be left to the unimportant writers who are deluded by it. Most people recognize that it is impertinent to write didactic poetry.

Give the opposite of : profound, amelioration, bigoted, attachment, zeal, loyalty, insensible, prevalent, rustic, antiquated, pedantic, insolence, worsted, overrated, decried, peers, retrospective, courteous, discredited, flourishes, dexterity.

Give two or more meanings for each of these words : project, grain, proof, battery, brook, worsted, talents, peers, interest, severe, substance, cant, province.

Look up the meaning of the words ANTONYM, HOMONYM, SYNONYM.

EXERCISE 2

Study the following pairs of words and distinguish their meanings :

antinomy, antimony ; alley, ally ; aural, oral ; adverse, averse ; benefit, benefice ; bizarre, bazaar ; coral, corral ; canvas, canvass ; desperate, disparate ; deceased, diseased ;

definite, definitive ; eyrie, eerie ; extent, extant ; fellow, felloe ; grisly, gristly ; heroin, heroine ; inter, intern ; imminent, immanent ; liniment, lineament ; patten, pattern ; precedent, precedence ; prescription, proscription ; regal, regale ; scree, screed ; scrip, script ; reverend, reverent.

EXERCISE 3

What do the following phrases mean ?

Drive a coach and six through ; white elephant ; dance of death ; twist the lion's tail ; cry wolf ; Jack-in-office ; within living memory ; Homer sometimes nods ; pour oil on the flame ; pass in review ; pot-boiler ; penny plain, twopence coloured ; press the words ; strained relations ; rest on one's oars ; rest on one's laurels ; look to one's laurels ; ring true (or false) ; rule of thumb ; built on sand ; scratch of the pen ; a sealed book ; short shrift ; tittle-rôle ; speak with one's tongue in one's cheek ; touch bottom ; ugly duckling ; Vanity Fair ; vicious circle ; wheels within wheels ; window-dressing.

EXERCISE 4

Look up the correct use of the following prepositions :

differ from, with, in ; compare with, to ; abound with, in ; vie with, in ; confer with, upon ; share with, in ; careful of, with, in ; confide in, to ; prevail against, upon ; incident to, upon ; occasion for, of ; plead for, with ; reckon with, among, without ; secure from, in, with ; treat with, for, of.

EXERCISE 5

One of the characters in ' The Rivals ', by Sheridan, has become famous for her misuse of words—Mrs. Malaprop. But Sheridan was not the first to create such a character. Dogberry, in ' Much Ado about Nothing ', causes amusement by his ignorance ; and Winifred Jenkins, in Smollett's ' Humphry Clinker ', is quite as amusing as Mrs. Malaprop. Comment on these mistakes of Winifred's :

(a) Chowder has had the misfortune to be worried by a butcher's dog, and came home in a terrible pickle—Mistriss was taken with the asterisks, but they soon went off.

(b) While we staid at Loff Loming, he and our two squires went three or four days churning among the wild men of the mountings ; a parcel of selvidges that lie in caves among the rocks, devour young children, and speak Velch, but the vords are different. (N.B.—Winifred is writing from Scotland.)

(c) Madam Baynar's woman has twenty good pounds a-year and parquisites, and dresses like a parson of distinkson. I dined with her and the valey de shambles.

(d) O gracious ! my poor Welsh brain has been spinning like a top ever since I came hither. And I have seen the Park, and the Paleass of Saint Gimeses, and the king's and the queen's magisterial pursing, and the sweet young princes, and the hilly-fents, and pybald ass, and all the rest of the royal family. (N.B.—The reference is to London.)

(e) Providinch hath bin pleased to make great halteration in the pasture of our affairs. We were yesterday three kiple chined by the grease of God, in the holy bands of mattermoney. . . . Now, Mrs. Mary, our satiety is to suppurate. Mr. Millfert goes to Bath along with the Dallisons, and the rest of us push home to Wales to pass our Christmash at Brampleton-hall.

EXERCISE 6

Look up the meaning of the phrases in which the following words can be used :

balance, blood, call, cross, death, dog, eat, fence, fish, fly, goose, green, head, horse, iron, issue, jump, keep, lamp, law, load, mask, mouth, nose, order, pack, plough, ride, ring, rush, salt, second, shoe, shoulder, storm, tread, wind, world.

SENTENCES

Make sure that each sentence you write expresses your thought clearly. To this end you must remember that the reader cannot possibly follow you unless you say precisely what you mean. It frequently happens that at the time of writing your mind is teeming with ideas, only some of which crystallize into thoughts, while others remain fluid. The sentence eventually written may depend

for its full meaning on what you had in mind but did not express. The result may be an ambiguous sentence. Consider, for example, two headlines which appeared in different papers :

MOTHER OF 50 TAKES TO FLYING
GUNMEN KILL FATHER OF 9

Each headline-writer gave his prepositional phrase a different meaning, but as such a phrase is ambiguous, neither headline can be considered clear English.

EXERCISE 7

What do the following sentences mean?

(a) All these boxes weigh five pounds.

(b) Emma was sorry to have to pay civilities to a person she did not like through three months.

(JANE AUSTEN)

(c) Men have been gradually deserting the pipe for a generation past ; though not, be it hoped, for the reason suggested by Ruskin, that cigarette-smoking 'enabled a man to do nothing without being ashamed of himself'.

(d) He never probably thought of departing from it, nor would his audience have perhaps endured his doing so.

(BAGEHOT, writing of the historical tradition which demanded Falstaff's dismissal when Hal became Henry V)

(e) To Shakespeare the supernatural is a convenient stage effect and no more, or he would not have made Hamlet speak of the undiscovered country from which no one returns immediately after his conversation with the ghost of his father.

(OSBERT BURDETT)

(f) The study of philosophy is not supposed to communicate a knowledge of many useful facts.

(g) The second temple stood for about five hundred years, when being much decayed Herod the Great undertook to rebuild it.

(Press)

(h) Such a successor, I gathered from Mrs. Munden, widowed, childless and lonely, as well as inapt for the minor offices, she had absolutely to have.

(HENRY JAMES)

(i) I entered the post which you compel me to leave a rich man, and I leave it a poor one.

(Press)

(j) A writer can shift his view point if it comes off.

(E. M. FORSTER)

(k) Ne'er cast a clout till May be out.

(l) Being the son of a rich man Jesus could not receive him as a disciple.

(GEORGE MOORE)

(m) THE FIVE BOYS SENTENCED UNDER LAW NOW DEAD.

(Press)

(n) In some cases trunks have to be filled in but in my case we pack our caravan.

(Lower School Essay)

(o) I received a letter from you on Saturday last which was written on Monday next before.

(PASTON LETTERS)

(p) MADMAN IN ALPS—MAKES CLIMB DREADED BY EXPERTS.

(Press)

PARAGRAPHS

In the third chapter of his 'History of England', Macaulay describes the state of England in 1685. At that time country clergymen were treated for the most part with contempt. Frequently they served as chaplains in the household of some nobleman or wealthy person, and were given menial tasks to perform. After some years of service they might be given a living: if so, they were expected to marry.

Study the following paragraph in which Macaulay describes what happened then:

In general the divine who quitted his chaplainship for a benefice and a wife found that he had only exchanged one class of vexations for another. Not one living in fifty enabled the incumbent to bring up a family comfortably. As children multiplied and grew, the household of the priest became more and more beggarly. Holes appeared more and more plainly in the thatch of his

parsonage and in his single cassock. Often it was only by toiling on his glebe, by feeding swine, and by loading dungcarts, that he could obtain daily bread ; nor did his utmost exertions always prevent the bailiffs from taking his concordance and his inkstand in execution. It was a white day on which he was admitted into the kitchen of a great house, and regaled by the servants with cold meat and ale. His children were brought up like the children of the neighbouring peasantry. His boys followed the plough ; and his girls went out to service. Study he found impossible : for the advowson of his living would hardly have sold for a sum sufficient to purchase a good theological library ; and he might be considered as unusually lucky if he had ten or twelve dogeared volumes among the pots and pans on his shelves. Even a keen and strong intellect might be expected to rust in so unfavourable a situation.

Notice how clearly Macaulay thinks. In the first sentence he states what he is going to write about. In the second, he gives the main reason for his statement. A supplementary reason follows in the third sentence. Then come illustrations of the priest's poverty : notice how definite Macaulay is. By an easy transition he touches on the subject of study, concluding with a sentence that sums up the paragraph by emphasizing the effects of environment on the unlucky man. The framework of the paragraph would therefore appear to be something like this :

Theme : An exchange of troubles when the priest was given a living and was expected to marry.

Explanation : Small income.

Result : Poverty after children were born.

Examples of this poverty : Parsonage in disrepair, clothes torn, &c.

Further results : Menial tasks necessary to eke out living.

Children uneducated.

Study impossible.

Conclusion : Even a keen student would become rusty.

EXERCISE 8

Study the following examples and state which illustrate (i) clear thinking, (ii) confused thinking :

(a) 'She always was clever,' said poor Mrs. Nickleby, brightening up, 'always, from a baby. I recollect when she was only two

years and a half old, that a gentleman who used to visit very much at our house—Mr. Watkins, you know, Kate, my dear, that your poor papa went bail for, who afterwards ran away to the United States, and sent us a pair of snow shoes, with such an affectionate letter that it made your poor dear father cry for a week. You remember the letter? In which he said he was very sorry he couldn't repay the fifty pounds just then, because his capital was all out at interest, and he was very busy making his fortune, but that he didn't forget you were his goddaughter, and he should take it very unkind if we didn't buy you a silver coral and put it down to his old account? Dear me, yes, my dear, how stupid you are! and spoke so affectionately of the old port wine that he used to drink a bottle and a half of every time he came. You must remember, Kate?'

'Yes, yes, mama; what of him?'

'Why, that Mr. Watkins, my dear,' said Mrs. Nickleby slowly, as if she were making a tremendous effort to recollect something of paramount importance; 'that Mr. Watkins—he wasn't any relation, Miss Knag will understand, to the Watkins who kept the Old Boar in the village; by the bye, I don't remember whether it was the Old Boar or the George the Third, but it was one of the two, I know, and it's much the same—that Mr. Watkins said, when you were only two years and a half old, that you were one of the most astonishing children he ever saw. He did indeed, Miss Knag, and he wasn't at all fond of children, and couldn't have had the slightest motive for doing it. I know it was he who said so, because I recollect, as well as if it was only yesterday, his borrowing twenty pounds of her poor dear papa the very moment afterwards.'

(DICKENS : *Nicholas Nickleby*)

(b) The audacity of his spirit was the more remarkable because his physical organization was unusually delicate. From a child he had been weak and sickly. In the prime of manhood his complaints had been aggravated by a severe attack of smallpox. He was asthmatic and consumptive. His slender frame was shaken by a constant hoarse cough. He could not sleep unless his head was propped by several pillows and could scarcely draw his breath in any but the purest air. Cruel headaches frequently tortured him. Exertion soon fatigued him. The physicians constantly kept up the hopes of his enemies by fixing some date beyond which, if there were anything certain in medical

science, it was impossible that his broken constitution could hold out. Yet, through a life which was one long disease, the force of his mind never failed, on any great occasion, to bear up his suffering and languid body.

(MACAULAY, about the Prince of Orange : *History of England*)

(c) This tragedy delights in explosions. Alfonso's empire is destroyed by a blast of gunpowder, and restored by a clap of thunder. After the death of Caesario and a short exhortation to that purpose by Orsino, all the conspirators fall down in a thunder clap, ask pardon of the king and are forgiven. This mixture of physical and moral power is beautiful. How interesting a waterspout would appear among Mr. Lewis's kings and queens. We anxiously look forward in his next tragedy to a fall of snow three or four feet deep ; or expect that a plot shall gradually unfold itself by means of a general thaw.

(SYDNEY SMITH, reviewing *Alfonso, King of Castile*, a tragedy in five acts by 'Monk' Lewis, a novelist of the so-called Terror School.)

(d) Buffon, the great French naturalist, imposed on himself the rule of steadily abstaining from all answer to attacks made upon him. 'Je n'ai jamais répondu à aucune critique,' he said to one of his friends who, on the occasion of a certain criticism, was eager to take up arms in his behalf ; 'je n'ai jamais répondu à aucune critique, et je garderai le même silence sur celle-ci.' On another occasion, when accused of plagiarism, and pressed by his friends to answer, 'Il vaut mieux,' he said, 'laisser ces mauvaises gens dans l'incertitude.' Even when reply to an attack was made successfully, he disapproved of it, he regretted that those he esteemed should make it. Montesquieu, more sensitive to criticism than Buffon, had answered, and successfully answered, an attack made upon his great work, the *Esprit des Lois*, by the *Gazetier Janseniste*. This Jansenist Gazetteer was a periodical of those times, a periodical such as other times, also, have occasionally seen, very pretentious, very aggressive, and, when the point to be seized was at all a delicate one, very apt to miss it. 'Notwithstanding this example,' said Buffon, who, as well as Montesquieu, had been attacked by the Jansenist Gazetteer, 'notwithstanding this example, I think I may promise my course will be different. I shall not answer a single word.'

(MATTHEW ARNOLD : *On Translating Homer*)

(e) An accident, which happened to the gentleman engaged in reviewing the sermon, proves in the most striking manner, the importance of this charity for restoring to life persons in whom the vital power is suspended. He was discovered, with Dr. Langford's discourse lying open before him, in a state of the most profound sleep, from which he could not by any means be awakened for a great length of time. By attending however to the rules prescribed by the Humane Society, flinging in the smoke of tobacco, applying hot flannels, and carefully removing the discourse itself to a great distance, the critic was restored to his disconsolate brothers. The only account he could give of himself was that he remembered reading on regularly till he came to the following pathetic description of a drowned tradesman, beyond which he recollects nothing :

'But to the individual himself as a man let us add the interruption to all the temporal business in which his interest was engaged. To him indeed now apparently lost the world is as nothing ; but it seldom happens that man can live for himself alone ; society parcels out its concerns in various connections ; and from one head issue waters which run down in many channels. The spring being suddenly cut off, what confusion must follow in the streams which have flowed from its source ? It may be that all the expectations reasonably raised of approaching prosperity, to those who have embarked in the same occupation, may at once disappear ; and the important interchange of commercial faith be broken off, before it could be brought to any advantageous conclusion.'

This extract will suffice for the style of the sermon. The charity itself is above all praise.

(SYDNEY SMITH : reviewing the *Anniversary Sermon of the Royal Humane Society*, by the Rev. W. Langford, D.D.)

EXERCISE 9

Construct an effective paragraph from this material :

August, 1642, the sword drawn ; two hostile factions in almost every county ; not easy to say which party more formidable ; Parliament commanded London, near-by counties, fleet, navigation of Thames, most of large towns and seaports ; had at their disposal almost all military stores, and able to raise duties on

imports and important products of domestic industry ; the King had little artillery and ammunition ; taxes levied on rural districts occupied by his troops probably less than taxes from London alone ; he relied chiefly on munificence of wealthy adherents, many of whom mortgaged land, pawned jewels, broke up silver chargers and christening bowls ; but voluntary liberality, even in times of excitement, a poor financial resource in comparison with severe and methodical taxation, which presses on willing and unwilling.

Build up your paragraph as follows : In August 1642 . . . It is not easy to say . . . The Houses commanded . . . They had at their disposal . . . The King was ill provided . . . The taxes which he laid . . . He relied, indeed, chiefly . . . Many of these . . . But experience has proved . . .

* * *

Before we leave the subject of clear thinking, it may be helpful to glance at some early writers and notice the difficulties they encountered in trying to express themselves clearly. We are apt to forget that language is a living thing, obeying the laws of growth and decay. English was not always as flexible as it is to-day. This we can see when we study a short passage from *The Repressor*, by Pecock, a writer of the fifteenth century. Expressed in modern English his argument in one place would read something like this :

Just as grammar and divinity are two distinct subjects for study, with well-defined limits of enquiry beyond which they do not presume to prescribe rules (and the same may be said of saddlery and tailoring), similarly moral philosophy and divinity concern the investigation of different truths, as the previous six examples show.

Pecock words his argument as follows :

Even as grammar and divinity be two diverse faculties and cunnings, and therefore be unmeddled, and each of them hath his proper to him bounds and marks, and how far and no farther he shall stretch himself upon matters, truths and conclusions, and not to intermete, neither intermeene, with any other faculty's bounds ; and even as saddlery and tailory be two diverse faculties

and cunnings, and therefore be unmeddled, and each of them hath his proper to him bounds and marks, and how far and no farther he shall stretch himself forth upon matters, truths and conclusions and not intercommune with any other craft or faculty in conclusions or truths ; so it is that the faculty of the said moral philosophy and the faculty of pure divinity, or the Holy Scripture, be two diverse faculties, each of them having his proper to him bounds and marks, and each of them having his proper to him truths and conclusions to be grounded in him, as the before-set six first conclusions show.

You can almost hear the laboured scratching of the quill as Pecoock writes the unwieldy clauses. You see, he was anxious to make his argument very clear, and could think of no other device than repetition. Moreover, he was sincere, if misguided, in his desire to use as many words of Teutonic origin as possible. Had he been able or willing to coin words from Latin or Greek, he might have found it easier to develop his thesis ; but Pecoock set his face against such foreign words, not realizing that the beauty of English often depends on a happy blend of words taken from the Romance languages as well as from Old English. In passing, you may find it interesting to compare some words of his choice with similar words of Romance origin :

about-writing	for circumscription (on a coin)
aforebar, beforebar	„ prevent
apropre	„ appropriate
beholdable	„ theoretic
closingly	„ inclusively
customable	„ habitual
endly	„ finally
undeadly	„ immortal
star-witty man	„ astrologer

EXERCISE 10

State clearly in your own words the meaning of the following :

(a) It is said that the Sunnes-light is not of one continued piece, but that it so uncessantly and without intermission doth

cast so thicke new raies, one in the necke of another, upon us, that wee cannot perceive the space betweene them.

(FLORIO : *Montaigne's Essayes*)

(b) I cannot receive that manner, whereby we establish the continuance of our life. I see that some of the wiser sort doe greatly shorten the same in respect of the common opinion. What said Cato Junior, to those who sought to hinder him from killing himselfe? 'Doe I now live the age, wherein I may justly be reprov'd to leave my life too soone?' Yet he was but eight and fortie yeares old. He thought that age very ripe, yea, and well advanced, considering how few men come unto it. And such as entertaine themselves with, I wot not what kind of course, which they call naturall, promiseth some few yeares beyond, might do it, had they a privilege that could exempt them from so great a number of accidents, unto which each one of us stands subject by a naturall subjection, and which may interrupt the said course they propose unto themselves.

(Ibid.)

(c) Picture took her faining from Poetry : from Geometry her rule, compasse, lines, proportion, and the whole Symmetry. Parrhasius was the first wan reputation, by adding Symmetry to Picture : hee added subtilty to the countenance, elegancy to the haire, love-lines to the face ; and, by the publike voice of all Artificers, deserved honour in the outer lines. Eupompus gave it splendor by numbers, and other elegancies. From the Opticks it drew reasons ; by which it considered, how things plac'd at distance, and a farre off, should appeare lesse : how above, or beneath the head, should deceive the eye, &c. So from thence it tooke shadowes, recessor, light, and heightnings.

(BEN JONSON : *Discoveries*)

(d) Civilians make sepulture but of the Law of Nations, others doe found it naturally and discover it also in animals. They that are so thick skinned as still to credit the story of the Phoenix, may say something for animall burning : More serious conjectures finde some examples of sepulture in elephants, cranes, the sepulchrall Cells of Pismires, and practice of Bees ; which civill society carrieth out their dead, and hath exequies, if not interrments.

(SIR THOMAS BROWNE : *Urn Burial*)

(e) This I know : that errors in a good government and in a bad are equally almost incident ; for what magistrate may not be misinformed, and much the sooner if liberty of printing be reduced into the power of a few ; but to redress willingly and speedily what hath been erred, and in highest authority to esteem a plain advertisement more than others have done a sumptuous bribe, is a virtue (honoured Lords and Commons) answerable to your highest actions and whereof none can participate but greatest and wisest men.

(MILTON : *Areopagitica*)

CHAPTER IV

COMING TO CONCLUSIONS

IN his *Leviathan*, Hobbes suggests this proof of the reality of his waking life :

‘ Because waking I often observe the absurdity of dreams, but never dream of the absurdities of my waking thoughts, I am well satisfied that being awake I know I dream not, though when I dream I think myself awake.’

Does this proof convince you ? Examine it carefully to find reasons for your answer.

If you are able to express your opinions clearly and form an accurate conclusion about some matter or argument, you will have mastered the elementary principles of logic. The simplest form of this may be seen in such an example as the following :

All birds are bipeds.

This creature is a bird.

Therefore this creature is a biped.

Such an argument is called a syllogism and is composed of three parts known as the major premise, the minor premise, and the conclusion. It is a useful method of sharpening your wits and quickening your powers of thought.

EXERCISE I

Complete the following syllogisms :

(a) *All men are mortal.*

Jones is a man.

- (b) *Lilies of the valley grow well in shady places.*
This garden is shady.
- (c) *No fish can live out of water.*
This creature can live out of water.
- (d) *All rodents are vermin.*
Vermin should be destroyed.
- (e) *Most wild birds are shy.*
The robin is a wild bird.

Make up five syllogisms.

EXERCISE 2

State why the following are incorrect :

- (a) *All rose bushes are prickly.*
This bush is prickly.
Therefore this bush is a rose bush.
- (b) *Grass is green.*
Green stands for jealousy.
Therefore grass stands for jealousy.
- (c) *No man likes being robbed.*
Being robbed is a rare event.
Therefore no man likes a rare event.
- (d) *Silence is golden.*
A sovereign is golden.
Therefore a sovereign is silence.
- (e) *A professional is one who plays for money.*
Bridge players play for money.
Therefore bridge players are professionals.

* * *

Let us apply the elementary principles of logic to a murder case. It forms the story of the Man of Law, one

Also correct.

of the Canterbury Pilgrims. We read that Constance, daughter of the Roman Emperor, married the Sultan of Syria, converted him and many of his lords to Christianity, and thereby incurred the enmity of her mother-in-law. This heartless woman contrived the death of her son and other converts, and then sent Constance out to sea in a rudderless boat. Wind and current in time bore her to the coast of Northumberland, where she was taken care of by the Constable and his wife. Misfortune still dogged Constance; for a wicked knight, unable to persuade Constance to accept him as her lover, killed the Constable's wife one night while her husband was away, and then placed the blood-stained knife by the side of the sleeping Constance. This evidence served to incriminate the unfortunate girl, and it was an easy matter for the knight to denounce her to the king. Luckily for Constance an unseen hand miraculously struck the knight dead as he swore that she was guilty. Others have not been so lucky, for many a conviction has been secured on conclusions drawn from the circumstances of the case. Such evidence is known as circumstantial evidence.

EXERCISE 3

In 'Clues and Crime' Mr. H. T. F. Rhodes mentions a case in which circumstantial evidence played an important part. In the year 1721 Catherine Shaw and her father occupied a tenement flat in Edinburgh. They were on bad terms because of Catherine's association with a man whom her father disliked. There were frequent quarrels between Shaw and his daughter, and he was known to have ill-treated her. One day there was an unusually violent quarrel, which ended in groans and the sound of somebody leaving the flat. There was no reply when the apprehensive neighbours knocked. The police were therefore sent for, and when the door was broken open the girl was discovered in a pool of blood, with a knife beside her. She was still alive and had breath enough before she died to cry: 'Cruel father, thou that art the cause of my death.' On his return the father was confronted with

his daughter's body and turned pale at the sight. He appeared nervous and there was blood *on* his hands and clothes. At the trial the defence was that the girl committed suicide. The quarrel was admitted, but not murder. Shaw explained the blood-stains by stating that he had been bled a day or two before, and the bandage had worked loose and so stained his shirt and hands. These stains, however, together with the girl's last words, ensured his condemnation and the man was hanged.

- (i) State the case for and against Shaw.
- (ii) What test, had it been in vogue then, could have put the matter beyond dispute?
- (iii) Suggest the judge's summing up.
- (iv) Hold a mock trial of the case.

EXERCISE 4

In the 'News Chronicle' there has appeared an interesting series entitled 'Episodes from Inspector Playfair's Notebook'. One of these concerns a swindler named Harmony, who got possession of the Wassenheimer diamonds. A coincidence led to his arrest.

With his daughter and Mr. Adolf Huffel, his right-hand man, Harmony celebrated his successful coup: there were caviare sandwiches, and a magnum of champagne was opened. All were flushed with success. That very night Harmony was taking the diamonds over to Amsterdam; so he asked Huffel to ring up Sanders and tell him to have a 'plane ready in half an hour. Huffel did so. He had not used an automatic telephone before. 'What number, Mr. Harmony?' '3376!' '3376, and what exchange?' 'Marigold.'

Just before this Superintendent Murdoch had rung up Playfair, Desborough 6627, to ask for any news of Harmony. Playfair was unable to tell him anything; but in ten minutes he heard, by telephone, what Harmony's arrangements were, and was enabled to arrest him at a private aerodrome.

Playfair did not tap the wire, nor did a confederate give Harmony away. What was the coincidence that led to the arrest?

EXERCISE 5

Can you discover a scientific error in the following description?

A casement high and triple-arch'd there was,
 All garlanded with carven imag'ries
 Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
 And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
 Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
 As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings ;
 And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
 And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
 A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and kings.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
 And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
 As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon ;
 Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
 And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
 And on her hair a glory like a saint :
 She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,
 Save wings, for heaven : Porphyro grew faint :
 She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

(KEATS : *The Eve of St. Agnes*)

What conclusion can you come to about the relationship between art and accuracy? Has Keats made a mistake that really matters? If not, where are we to draw the line? What, for example, shall we say when we discover, by comparing Chapters 3, 4, 19 and 26 of 'The Vicar of Wakefield' and noting what time has elapsed, that Goldsmith pictures little Bill reading the Bible aloud at the age of one?

EXERCISE 6

It is interesting to compare the mistakes of the writer with those of the painter. Mr. Frank Rutter tells us that he was asked to give his opinion about a marine painting. There was a yacht in the foreground, and the artist had put the mainsail over the bow, the foresail over the stern and the helmsman in the bow. 'Those are mere details,' said the artist. Mr. Rutter agreed, but pointed out

that it was a little unusual for a mainsail to be nicely filled with a north-east wind while the foresail bellied out with a south-westerly one, as in the painting. 'Oh well,' said the artist, 'I'm not a yachtsman. But I did think you would like the design.'

What is your opinion? Must the artist be accurate or is he to be allowed some freedom? If accuracy is essential, what differentiates a painting from a coloured photograph? If the artist is to be free, should the line be drawn somewhere?

EXERCISE 7

Examine and comment on the following proofs :

(a) As to the matter of long-billed birds growing fatter in moderate frosts, I have no doubt within myself what should be the reason. The thriving at those times appears to me to arise altogether from the gentle check which the cold throws upon insensible perspiration. The case is just the same with blackbirds, etc. ; and farmers and warreners observe, the first, that their hogs fat more kindly at such times, and the latter, that their rabbits are never in such good case as in a gentle frost. But when frosts are severe, and of long continuance, the case is soon altered ; for then a want of food soon overbalances the repletion occasioned by a checked perspiration. I have observed, moreover, that some human constitutions are more inclined to plumpness in winter than in summer.

(GILBERT WHITE : *The Natural History of Selborne*)

(b) There are two windows in the chamber. One of them is unobstructed by furniture, and is wholly visible. The lower portion of the other is hidden from view by the head of the unwieldy bedstead which is thrust close up against it. The former was found securely fastened from within. It resisted the utmost force of those who endeavoured to raise it. A large gimlet hole had been pierced in its frame to the left, and a very stout nail was found fitted therein, nearly to the head. Upon examining the other window, a similar nail was seen similarly fitted in it ; and a vigorous attempt to raise this sash, failed also. The police were now satisfied entirely that egress had not been in these directions. And, therefore, it was thought a matter of supererogation to withdraw the nails and open the windows.

(POE : *Tales of Mystery and Imagination*)

EXERCISE 8

Study this passage :

There is no thought or feeling that can have entered into the mind of man which he would be eager to communicate to others, or which they would listen to with delight, that is not a fit subject for poetry. It is not a branch of authorship ; it is ' the stuff of which our life is made '. The rest is ' mere oblivion ', a dead letter ; for all that is worth remembering in life is the poetry of it. Fear is poetry, hope is poetry, love is poetry, hatred is poetry ; contempt, jealousy, remorse, admiration, wonder, pity, despair or madness, are all poetry. . . . The child is a poet when he first plays at hide-and-seek, or repeats the story of *Jack the Giant-killer* ; the shepherd boy is a poet when he first crowns his mistress with a garland of flowers ; the countryman when he stops to look at the rainbow ; the city apprentice when he gazes after the Lord Mayor's show ; the miser, when he hugs his gold ; the courtier, who builds his hopes upon a smile ; the savage, who paints his idol with his blood ; the slave, who worships a tyrant, or the tyrant, who fancies himself a god ; the vain, the ambitious, the proud, the choleric man, the hero and the coward, the beggar and the king, the rich and the poor, the young and the old, all live in a world of their own making ; and the poet does no more than describe what all the others think and act. If his art is folly and madness, it is folly and madness at second hand.

(HAZLITT : *Lectures on the English Poets*)

The following passage occurred in a vigorous attack on Hazlitt by one of his contemporaries. Is the reviewer's argument a sound one ?

His remarks on particular quotations are often injudicious ; his general reasonings, for the most part, unintelligible . . . We are all under the influence of our passions and affections ; that is, in Mr. Hazlitt's new language, we all act on the principles of poetry and are in truth, poets. We all exert our muscles and limbs, therefore we are anatomists and surgeons ; we have teeth which we employ in chewing, therefore we are dentists ; we use our eyes to look at objects, therefore we are oculists ; we eat beef and mutton, therefore we are all deeply versed in the science of breeding and fattening sheep and oxen. Mr. Hazlitt will

forgive us for anticipating these brilliant conclusions, which he no doubt intends to promulgate in a course of lectures at some future day ; we claim no merit for announcing them ; the praise, we admit, is exclusively his own, for they are merely legitimate inferences from his own peculiar mode of abusing English.

(Quarterly Review)

EXERCISE 9

Think or find out reasonable explanations for the following :

- (a) *Why many fat persons are good-natured.*
- (b) *Why a crowd can be easily influenced.*
- (c) *Why a murderer returns to the scene of the crime.*
- (d) *Why the sun looks red when it is near the horizon.*
- (e) *Why most people dislike the dark.*
- (f) *Why the rear wheels leave the ground when a motorist takes a left-hand corner too quickly.*
- (g) *What connexion the word 'heathen' has with 'heath'.*
- (h) *Why tariffs can be both harmful and beneficial.*
- (i) *Why it is unwise to bathe immediately after a meal.*
- (j) *Why it is cold at great altitudes.*
- (k) *Why country roads wind about.*
- (l) *Why trees can sometimes help you to find your bearings.*
- (m) *Why the grass on the South Downs is short.*
- (n) *Why Norman churches are so sturdily built.*
- (o) *Why sounds are heard easily across water.*
- (p) *Why some stars that have already disappeared are still visible.*
- (q) *Why Shakespeare called one of his plays 'Julius Caesar', although the central figure seems to be Brutus.*
- (r) *Why the term 'deus ex machina' is applied to a too obvious solution of some problem in a play or novel.*
- (s) *Why the word 'tribulation' was derived from a Latin word meaning 'a winnowing fan'.*
- (t) *Why an organist can control the volume of sound issuing from some of the pipes.*
- (u) *Why depressing the left pedal of a piano reduces the volume of sound.*

(v) *Why it is inaccurate to call the right pedal of a piano the loud pedal.*

(w) *Why, in the development of a national literature, prose tends to reach maturity later than poetry.*

(x) *Why the distress signal is S O S.*

(y) *What determined the choice of London's site.*

(z) *Why we sometimes laugh at the misfortunes of others.*

* * *

Facts and figures often provide a difficult problem, for it is not easy to arrive at the right conclusions after studying those comparative groups of facts and figures that we call statistics. They may be helpful in determining some matter, but Mr. Bernard Shaw has pointed out, in the preface to *The Doctor's Dilemma*, how misleading statistics may be. He refers especially to what he calls 'the percentage dodge'. As an example, he supposes that in a tiny village two people are attacked by smallpox during an epidemic of that disease. One of them dies, the other recovers : one of them has vaccination marks, the other has none. 'Immediately,' says Mr. Shaw, 'either the vaccinists or the anti-vaccinists publish the triumphant news that at such and such a place not a single vaccinated person died of smallpox whilst 100 per cent of the unvaccinated perished miserably ; or, as the case may be, that 100 per cent of the unvaccinated recovered whilst the vaccinated succumbed to the last man.'

Statistics do not necessarily prove or disprove anything, for an accurate conclusion will depend on a thorough investigation. It will be good practise for you to examine a few statistics and decide what information you think they convey to you.

EXERCISE 10

In October 1935, during the Italo-Abyssinian war, the proprietors of the 'Daily Mail' organized a ballot. Readers were asked if they were in favour of

- (i) economic sanctions

- (ii) military sanctions
- (iii) Great Britain remaining a member of the League of Nations
- (iv) rearming

A coupon was supplied, together with a free postal label. One week was devoted to this propaganda and the results published as follows :

- (i) against economic sanctions : 3—1
- (ii) against military sanctions : 5—1
- (iii) against Great Britain remaining a member of the League of Nations : 2—1
- (iv) in favour of rearming : 22—1

*No figures relating to signatures were published, but it was said that ' a very considerable body of readers recorded their vote '.
What conclusions do you come to about this ballot ?*

EXERCISE 11

The report on road accidents for January 1937 includes the following facts and figures :

Deaths 521 ; serious injuries 3,793 ; minor injuries 10,809. Sixty-seven per cent. of the deaths, sixty-eight per cent. of the serious injuries and seventy-nine per cent. of the minor injuries occurred on roads subject to the thirty-mile speed limit.

What conclusions can you come to about the usefulness of the speed limit ?

EXERCISE 12

' Owing to the general rise in prices two years ago we were unfortunately compelled to advance the price of our famous Swoopalotin Vacuum Cleaners by 20%. Conditions being normal once again, we have pleasure in announcing that as from to-day, by reason of a 20% reduction, the Cleaners will be on sale at the old price.'

Is this announcement accurate ? Give your reasons.



EXERCISE 13

BUY GALLOWAY'S "GOLDEN" GARGLE

80% of the Doctors who recommend this Invaluable Preventive against Coughs and Colds specify GALLOWAY'S—which is undoubtedly THE BEST.

Explain the fallacy in this advertisement.

EXERCISE 14

MOTOR OUT OF INCOME AT LESS THAN TRAIN FARE

Could this advertiser, if pressed to do so, prove the accuracy of his recommendation?

CHAPTER V

POINTS OF VIEW

THE hunter and the bear met one morning on a narrow mountain pass. Said the bear : ' Here comes my breakfast.' Said the hunter : ' Here comes my overcoat.'

Much depends on the point of view. It may be amusing, as when Malvolio supposed Maria's forgery to be a love-letter from his mistress, Olivia ; it may be tragic, as when Christ warned His disciples, ' The time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service ' ; it may rouse your curiosity or cause discussion about the correct interpretation of a passage or the different treatment of a similar theme.

Let us consider the interpretation of a passage from *Macbeth*. You may remember that Macbeth killed Duncan in order to win the crown. His suspicions then forced him to plot Banquo's death, for Banquo knew too much about the prophecies of the weird sisters. Further suspicions were aroused when the weird sisters, at a second meeting, warned Macbeth to beware of Macduff. Before Macbeth can take any steps to rid himself of this obstacle, he hears that Macduff has fled to England. Without hesitation Macbeth puts to the sword Lady Macduff, her children and all the household. News of this savage act is brought to Macduff while he is in conversation with one of the late king's sons, Malcolm, who hopes to lead an army against Macbeth and regain the throne. Macduff is crushed by the news :

Macduff. My children too?

Rosse.

Wife, children, servants, all

That could be found.

Macduff.

And I must be from thence!

My wife killed too?

Rosse.

I have said.

Malcolm.

Be comforted:

Let's make us medicines of our great revenge,
To cure this deadly grief.

Macduff. He has no children.—All my pretty ones?
Did you say, all?—O hell-kite!—All?
What, all my pretty chickens, and their dam,
At one fell swoop?

Malcolm. Dispute it like a man.

Macduff.

I shall do so;

But I must also feel it as a man:

I cannot but remember such things were,
That were most precious to me.

Discussion has arisen about the words, 'He has no children.' Does 'he' refer to Macbeth or to Malcolm? The arguments are as follows:

The reference to Macbeth

It is natural that Malcolm should suggest revenge, partly to sympathize with Macduff and partly to make sure of his help in the proposed attack on Macbeth. Revenge was the readiest suggestion he could make. But Macduff at once remembers that Macbeth has no children; revenge is therefore impossible and Macduff's grief is redoubled. Yet when its violence is spent, Macduff can reflect that Macbeth's childlessness, although allowing no opportunity of revenge, provides the sternest incentive to action; for any punishment Macduff inflicts must fall far short of the injury he has suffered.

Secondly, if 'he' refers to Malcolm, Macduff appears to be speaking very rudely of his future sovereign.

The reference to Malcolm

Macbeth had children, for early in the play Lady Macbeth remarked:

I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me.

Secondly, in one place Macbeth, amazed by his wife's grim efficiency in planning Duncan's murder, exclaims :

Bring forth men children only,
For thy undaunted mettle should compose
Nothing but males.

Thirdly, after Duncan's murder Macbeth remembers that the weird sisters promised Banquo's sons the succession to the throne ; whereupon in angry disillusion he cries out :

If 't be so,
For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind ;
For them the gracious Duncan have I murdered ;
Put rancours in the vessel of my peace,
Only for them ; and mine eternal jewel
Given to the common enemy of man,
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings !
Rather than so, come, fate, into the list,
And champion me to the utterance !

Such an outburst is more understandable if Macbeth had a son who might succeed him as king.

Lastly, it is the most natural thing in the world for Macduff, the bereaved father, to reject the glib comfort of revenge offered by Malcolm, a young bachelor who cannot know what it means to suffer such a loss.

What is your opinion ?

EXERCISE I

- (a) The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike th' inevitable hour.
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

What difference is made to the sense if you substitute 'await' for 'awaits' ? Which makes the better reading ? Why ?

- (b) Nay, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.

Macbeth says this as he looks at his bloodstained hands, shortly after Duncan's murder. It is possible to regard 'one' as a pronoun qualified by 'green', or as an adjective qualifying 'red'. Which is better? Why?

- (c) Nigh on the plain in many cells prepared,
That underneath had veins of liquid fire
Sluiced from the lake, a second multitude
With wond'rous art founded the massy ore,
Severing each kind, and scumm'd the bullion dross.
A third as soon had formed within the ground
A various mould, and from the boiling cells
By strange conveyance fill'd each hollow nook.

Milton is here describing how the devils, directed by Mammon, prepared for the building of their council chamber, Pandemonium. The first multitude had dug into a near-by hill and revealed 'ribs of gold'; so the next task was to refine it and any other precious metals discovered by digging. 'Founded' is the reading of the first edition. In 1674 Milton altered the word to 'found out'. Most editors keep the first reading but some maintain that Milton's alteration makes better sense. Why?

- (d) 'When Macbeth is confirming himself in the horrid purpose of stabbing his king, he breaks out amidst his emotions into a wish natural for a murderer :

Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor Heaven peep through the blanket of the dark
To cry, Hold, hold !

In this passage is exerted all the force of poetry ; that force which calls new powers into being, which embodies sentiment, and animates matter ; yet, perhaps, scarce any man now peruses it without some disturbance of his attention from the counter-action of the words to the ideas. What can be more dreadful than to implore the presence of night, invested, not in common

obscurity, but in the smoke of hell? Yet the efficacy of this invocation is destroyed by the insertion of an epithet now seldom heard but in the stable, and "dun" night may come or go without any other notice than contempt . . . we cannot surely but sympathize with the horrors of a wretch about to murder his master, his friend, his benefactor, who suspects that the weapon will refuse its office, and start back from the breast which he is preparing to violate. Yet this sentiment is weakened by the name of an instrument used by butchers and cooks in the meanest employments; we do not immediately conceive that any crime of importance is to be committed with a *knife*; or who does not, at last, from the long habit of connecting a knife with sordid offices, feel aversion rather than terror?'

(DR. JOHNSON : *The Rambler*)

Give your reasons for agreeing or disagreeing with Johnson. Is he right in assigning the speech to Macbeth?

(e) *In the following limerick an Oxford student satirized the philosophy of idealism :*

There was a young man who said, ' God
Must think it exceedingly odd
That this juniper tree
Just ceases to be
When there's no one about in the Quad.'

Ronald Knox rebuked the student as follows :

Dear Sir, Your astonishment's odd;
I am always about in the Quad.,
And that's why the tree
Will continue to be,
Since observed by yours faithfully, God.

From a reading of these two limericks can you understand what was the point at issue? If so, state it in your own words: if not, find out something about idealism and then answer the question.

* * *

Comments of a different kind are called for when you have to compare passages similar to each other in subject

matter. You are then faced with the task of deciding what the author's aim was, how he obtained his effect, whether one passage is better than another or only different from it. You may find it helpful to study these points :

(i) The author's attitude : (grave or gay, kindly or sarcastic, argumentative or explanatory)

(ii) His words : (short or long, precise or vague, simple or ornate)

(iii) His rhythm : (smooth, harsh or indeterminate)

(iv) His thought sequence : (clear or confused)

(v) His imaginative power : (keen or dull or moderate)

EXERCISE 2

(a) . . . now the doubtful dusk revealed
 The knolls once more where, couched at ease,
 The white kine glimmered, and the trees
 Laid their dark arms about the field :

And sucked from out the distant gloom
 A breeze began to tremble o'er
 The large leaves of the sycamore,
 And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,
 Rocked the full-foliaged elms, and swung
 The heavy-folded rose, and flung
 The Lilies to and fro, and said

'The dawn, the dawn', and died away ;
 And East and West, without a breath,
 Mixt their dim lights, like life and death,
 To broaden into boundless day.

(TENNYSON : *In Memoriam*)

(b) I shall never forget the delightful sensation with which I exchanged the dark, smoky, smothering atmosphere of the Highland hut, in which we had passed the night so uncomfortably, for the refreshing fragrance of the morning air, and the glorious beams of the rising sun, which, from a tabernacle of purple and golden clouds, were darted full on such a scene of natural romance

and beauty as had never before greeted my eyes. To the left lay the valley, down which the Forth wandered on its easterly course, surrounding the beautiful detached hill, with all its garland of woods. On the right, amid a profusion of thickets, knolls and crags, lay the bed of a broad mountain lake, lightly curled into tiny waves by the breath of the morning breeze, each glittering in its course under the influence of the sunbeams. High hills, rocks and banks, waving with natural forests of birch and oak, formed the borders of this enchanting sheet of water ; and, as their leaves rustled to the wind and twinkled in the sun, gave to the depth of solitude a sort of life and vivacity.

(SCOTT : *Rob Roy*)

- (i) *Which passage do you prefer ? Why ?*
- (ii) *Is each description equally vivid ? Refer to details in your answer.*
- (iii) *Which passage is the more imaginative ? Give your reasons.*
- (iv) *Write a description of a sunset.*

EXERCISE 3

Study the following extracts :

(a) All day long there is a retinue of mouldy gigs and chaise-carts in the street ; and herds of shabby vampires, Jew and Christian, overrun the house, sounding the plate-glass windows with their knuckles, striking discordant octaves on the Grand Piano, drawing wet forefingers over the pictures, breathing on the blades of the best dinner knives, punching the squabs of chairs and sofas with their dirty fists, touzling the feather beds, opening and shutting all the drawers, balancing the silver spoons and forks, looking into the very threads of the drapery and linen, and disparaging everything. There is not a secret place in the whole house. Fluffy and snuffy strangers stare into the kitchen range as curiously as into the attic clothes press. Stout men with napless hats on look out of the bedroom windows, and cut jokes with friends in the street. Quiet, calculating spirits withdraw into the dressing-rooms with catalogues, and make marginal notes thereon with stumps of pencils. Two brokers invade the very fire-escape, and take a panoramic survey of the neighbourhood from the top of the house. The swarm and buzz, and going

up and down, endure for days. The Capital Modern Household Furniture, etc., is on view.

Then there is a palisade of tables made in the best drawing-room; and on the capital, French polished, extending, telescopic range of Spanish mahogany dining-tables with turned legs, the pulpit of the Auctioneer is erected; and the herds of shabby vampires, Jew and Christain. the strangers fluffy and snuffy, and the stout men with the napless hats, congregate about it and sit on everything within reach, mantelpieces included, and begin to bid. Hot, humming and dusty are the rooms all day; and—high above the heat, hum, and dust—the head and shoulders, voice and hammer of the Auctioneer are ever at work. The men in the carpet caps get flustered and vicious with tumbling the Lots about, and still the Lots are going, going, gone; still coming on. Sometimes there is a joking and a general roar. This lasts all day and three days following. The Capital Modern Household Furniture, etc., is on sale.

(DICKENS : *Dombey and Son*)

(b) In that dark time of December the sale of the household furniture lasted beyond the middle of the second day. Mr. Tulliver, who had begun, in his intervals of consciousness, to manifest an irritability which often appeared to have as a direct effect the recurrence of spasmodic rigidity and insensibility, had lain in this living death through the critical hours when the noise of the sale came nearest to his chamber. Mr. Turnbull had decided that it would be a less risk to let him remain where he was than to move him to Luke's cottage—a plan which the good Luke had proposed to Mrs. Tulliver, thinking it would be very bad if the master were 'to waken up' at the noise of the sale; and the wife and children had sat imprisoned in the silent chamber, watching the prostrate figure on the bed, and trembling lest the blank face should suddenly show some response to the sounds which fell on their own ears with such obstinate, painful repetition.

But it was over at last—that time of importunate certainty and eye-straining suspense. The sharp sound of a voice almost as metallic as the rap that followed it had ceased, the tramping of footsteps on the gravel had died out. Mrs. Tulliver's blond face seemed aged ten years by the last thirty hours. The poor woman's mind had been busy divining when her favourite things were being knocked down by the terrible hammer; her heart

had been fluttering at the thought that first one thing and then another had gone to be identified as hers in the hateful publicity of the Golden Lion, and all the while she had to sit and make no sign of this inward agitation. Such things bring lines in well-rounded faces, and broaden streaks of white among the hairs that once looked as if they had been dipped in pure sunshine. Already, at three o'clock, Kezia, the good-hearted, bad-tempered housemaid, who regarded all people who came to the sale as her personal enemies, the dirt on whose feet was of a peculiarly vile quality, had begun to scrub and swill with an energy much assisted by a continual low muttering against 'folks as came to buy up other folks's things,' and made light of 'scrazing' the tops of mahogany tables over which better folks than themselves had had to—suffer a waste of tissue through evaporation. She was not scrubbing indiscriminately, for there would be further dirt of the same atrocious kind made by people who had still to fetch away their purchases; but she was bent on bringing the parlour, where that 'pipe-smoking pig' the bailiff had sat, to such an appearance of scant comfort as could be given to it by cleanliness and the few articles of furniture bought in for the family. Her mistress and the young folks should have their tea in it that night, Kezia was determined.

(GEORGE ELIOT: *The Mill on the Floss*)

(i) 'Dickens describes his scene with almost photographic exactness: George Eliot relies on suggestion for her effect.' Can you prove this by tabulating the details of each scene in two columns?

(ii) Which is the more realistic description? Is realism more or less effective than the power of suggestion, or just different? Do you think that such a picture as Frith's 'Derby Day' or a Dutch interior provides a good analogy with the extract from 'Dombey and Son'?

(iii) Write in the style of Dickens a description of a jumble sale, and in the style of George Eliot a passage entitled 'To Be Sold'.

EXERCISE 4

The following are humorous portrayals of grief and madness. Find two serious passages to contrast with them, and explain what constitutes the ludicrous in literature:

(a) Asleep, my love? What, dead, my dove?

O Pyramus, arise.

Speak, speak.—Quite dumb? Dead, dead? A tomb
Must cover thy sweet eyes.

These lily brows, this cherry nose,

These yellow cowslip cheeks,

Are gone, are gone : lovers, make moan !

His eyes were green as leeks.

O sisters three, come, come to me,

With hands as pale as milk ;

Lay them in gore, since you have shore

With shears his thread of silk.

Tongue, not a word : come, trusty sword ;

Come, blade, my breast imbrue :

And farewell, friends ; thus Thisby ends :

Adieu, adieu, adieu. (*Dies.*)

(b) The wind whistles—the moon rises—see

They have kill'd my squirrel in his cage.

Is this a grasshopper?—Ha ! no ; it is my

Whiskerandos—you shall not keep him—

I know you have him in your pocket—

An oyster may be cross'd in love !—Who says

A whale's a bird?—Ha ! did you call, my love ?

He's here ! he's there !—He's everywhere !

Ah me ! he's nowhere ! (*Exit.*)

(SHERIDAN : *The Critic*)

EXERCISE 5

Study these two comments on honour :

(a) *Falstaff*. Hal, if thou see me down in the battle and
bestride me,—so : 'Tis a point of friendship.

Prince Henry. Nothing but a colossus can do thee that friend-
ship. Say thy prayers, and farewell.

Falstaff. I would it were bed-time, and all well.

Prince Henry. Why, thou owest God a death. (*Exit.*)

Falstaff. 'Tis not due yet ; I would be loath to pay him before
his day. What need I be so forward with him that calls not
on me ? Well, 'tis no matter ; Honour pricks me on. Yea,
but how if honour prick me off when I come on ? How then ?

Can honour set to a leg? No. Or an arm? No. Or take away the grief of a wound? No. Honour hath no skill in surgery then? No. What is honour? A word. What is in that word, honour? What is that honour? Air. A trim reckoning! Who hath it? He that died o' Wednesday. Doth he feel it? No. Doth he hear it? No. It is insensible then? Yea, to the dead. But will it not live with the living? No. Why? Detraction will not suffer it. Therefore I'll none of it. Honour is a mere scutcheon, and so ends my catechism.

(*Henry IV*, Part 1)

(b) *Acres*. But my honour, David, my honour! I must be very careful of my honour.

David. Ay, by the mass! and I would be very careful of it: and I think in return my honour couldn't do less than be very careful of me.

Acres. Odds blades! David, no gentleman will ever risk the loss of his honour.

David. I say then, it would be but civil in honour never to risk the loss of a gentleman.—Look 'ee, master, this honour seems to me a marvellous false friend: ay, truly, a very courtier-like servant.—Put the case, I was a gentleman (which, thank God, no one can say of me;) well—my honour makes me quarrel with another gentleman of my acquaintance.—So—we fight. (Pleasant enough that!) Boh!—I kill him—(the more's my luck!) now, pray who gets the profit of it?—Why, my honour. But put the case that he kills me! by the mass! I go to the worms, and my honour whips over to my enemy.

Acres. No, David—in that case!—Odds crowns and laurels! your honour follows you to the grave.

David. Now, that's just the place where I could make a shift to do without it.

(SHERIDAN: *The Rivals*)

(i) *Do you think the passages are amusing? Is one more amusing than the other? Give reasons.*

(ii) *How does each author adapt the words of the speaker to his social status?*

(iii) *Write a speech in Falstaff's style on truth.*

(iv) *Imagine you are one of those peppery generals who on school Speech Days boast that they never reached a form higher than 4B. Write the speech you will deliver to the boys of Doandie*

(Turn to p. 70.)

GENESIS

*The Earth**Ch. 1¹⁻²*

‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth; and the earth was void and waste, and darkness was on the face of the deep.’

*The Earth**Ch. 38⁴⁻⁶*

‘Where wast thou when I founded the earth,
Tell me if thou knowest?
Upon what are its pedestals settled?
Or who set its corner-stone?
Who set its measurement; dost thou know?
Who stretched the line upon it?’

JOB

*The Light**Ch. 1³⁻⁵ : 14-18*

‘And God said let there be light and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light day and the darkness he called night.

And God said let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and for years.

And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night.

And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth; and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness.’

*The Light**Ch. 38¹²⁻¹⁴ : 19-20 : 24*

‘Hast thou in thy lifetime commanded the morning,
And taught the dawn to know its place?
So that it seize the corners of the earth,
That the wicked may be shaken out of it.
As the clay impressed by a signet,
The form of things is changed by it;
And they stand forth like a rich garment.’

‘Where is the way where light dwelleth?
And the darkness, where is its place?
That thou shouldest take it to its boundary,
And that thou shouldest know the paths to its house.
By what way is the light spread abroad
When it is scattered by the East wind on the earth?’

‘And God said let the waters be gathered together into one place ; and let the dry land appear. And God called the dry land earth, and the gathering together of the waters called he seas.’

The Stars

Ch. I¹⁶

‘He made the stars also.’

The Rain

Ch. 2⁵⁻⁶

‘For the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth ; and there was not a man to till the ground ; but there went up a mist from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.’

Ch. 38⁸⁻¹¹ : 16

‘Who shut the sea in with double doors,
When it burst forth as though it came from the womb ?
I set the clouds for its clothing,
And heavy clouds for its swaddling-bands.
And I assigned to it my decree,
And set bars and doors,
And said, thus far shalt thou come and no farther
And here shall the majesty of thy waves be stayed.’

‘Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea ?
Or hast thou walked through the depths of the abyss ?’

The Stars

Ch. 38³¹⁻³²

‘Canst thou bind Pleiades in fetters ?
Or canst thou loosen the cords of Orion ?
Canst thou bring forth the planets in their season ?
And the Great Bear with her sons canst thou lead ?’

The Rain

Ch. 38²⁵⁻²⁸ : 37-38

‘Who cleft a channel for the rain-flood to go,
And a way for the thunder-bolts ?
To cause it to rain upon the earth where no man dwells,
On the desert which has no inhabitant ;
To refresh the wilderness and the desolate place ;
And to cause the tender grass to spring up ;
Who is father to the rain ?
Or who hath brought forth the dew-drops ?’

‘Who, by his wisdom, can number the drops of rain ?
And the bottles of heaven, who shall spill them forth,
So that they shall be poured out on the dry earth,
To soften it when the hard clods cleave together ?’

College on the outbreak of *The-War-to-Finish-off-the-War-to-End-War*.

(v) Can you think of any arguments in defence of (a) war, and (b) duelling? Sir Arthur Keith has called war 'Nature's pruning hook'. Is the analogy a sound one?

EXERCISE 6

Study pp. 68-9 and then answer these questions :

- (i) Which account is the more vivid? Why?
- (ii) Which account do you think is in poetic form in the original? What makes you think so?
- (iii) Compare this translation of Job with the Authorized Version. What differences do you notice?
- (iv) What myths and legends are similar to the story of creation as told in the Bible? How do you account for this?

CHAPTER VI

EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY

FOR many years the advertiser has made good use of pictures. Long ago Pear's soap became famous through association with a well-known painting by Millais : to-day in magazines and newspapers, from hoardings and railway platforms pictorial advertisements thrust themselves upon our notice. The value of such advertisements lies in their immediate appeal to the spectator, and no doubt the sale of many a patent food or medicine has increased after the appearance of pictures emphasizing its incalculable worth. For we are all attracted by pictures : in fact, G. K. Chesterton maintains that the cave man's art has survived to prove man's innate love of drawing.

If pictures are so attractive, no wonder that writers have sought their help. This does not always take the form of coloured or black-and-white illustrations. A writer will often use words which bring a picture before the reader's mind. Perhaps the comparison is the most obvious example of such writing :

To-day the world is like a drunkard who curses, for his headaches and depleted powers and possessions, everything but his habits.

(EDWARD THOMPSON : *Lament for Adonis*)

A satire may have—well—all sorts of qualities :
Be light as the bank account after summer-holidays
Or solider than The Times, however solid, is.

(ROBERT NICHOLS : *Fisbo*)

Those are two examples of direct comparison. In another form the comparison may be implied rather than openly stated :

Poetry is the lava of the imagination whose eruption prevents the earthquake.

These and other expressions which seek to create some artistic effect, especially by departing from literal truth, are called FIGURES OF SPEECH.

EXERCISE I

Study the following and from the heading and the example try to define correctly each figure of speech. Check your definition by referring to 'A Dictionary of Modern English Usage', by H. W. Fowler.

SIMILE

'Stint your shouting,' said Tom Tool, 'isn't it as hard to cure as a wart on the back of a hedgehog?'

(A. E. COPPARD : *The Man from Kilsheelan*)

They sit there like a passage of semiquavers on a mile-long expanse of ruled paper.

(ALDOUS HUXLEY : *Beyond the Mexique Bay*. N.B.—He is describing innumerable black pelicans perched on telpher wires.)

METAPHOR

The spirit of man is blind and dumb except God touch him, and awake, in the winter of his flesh, the spring of his immortality.

(CHARLES MORGAN : *The Fountain*)

It is not possible to eat your cake and have it.

PERSONIFICATION

April Fool swore they had exchanged conditions ; but Good Friday was observed to look extremely grave ; and Sunday held her fan before her face that she might not be seen to smile.

(LAMB : *Rejoicings upon the New Year's Coming of Age*)

Through our sunless lanes creeps Poverty with her hungry eyes, and Sin with his sodden face follows close behind her.

(WILDE : *The Young King*)

EPIGRAM

Here richly, with ridiculous display,
The Politician's corpse was laid away.
While all of his acquaintance sneered and slanged,
I wept ; for I had longed to see him hanged.

(HILAIRE BELLOC)

Truth telling is not compatible with the defence of the realm.

(BERNARD SHAW : *Heartbreak House*)

PARADOX

There are so many kinds of stupidity, and cleverness is one of the worst.

(THOMAS MANN)

The optimist is a better reformer than the pessimist ; and the man who believes life to be excellent is the man who alters it most.

(G. K. CHESTERTON : *Dickens*)

APOSTROPHE

You violets that first appear,
By your pure purple mantles known,
Like the proud virgins of the year,
As if the spring were all your own,
What are you when the rose is blown ?

(SIR HENRY WOTTON)

O Moon, when I gaze on thy glorious face
Careering along through the boundaries of space,
The thought has often come into my mind
If I ever shall see thy glorious behind.

(*The Stuffed Owl*)

IRONY

(N.B.—Thackeray is referring to Shandon, a brilliant but feckless and selfish journalist.)

He ought to be wretched, but he has Jack and Tom to drink with, and that consoles him : he might have a high place, but as he can't, why, he can drink with Tom and Jack : he might be providing for his wife and children, but Thomas and John have got a bottle of brandy which they want him to taste : he might pay poor Snip, the tailor, the £20 which the poor devil wants for his landlord, but John and Thomas lay their hands upon his

purse ; and so he drinks whilst his tradesman goes to gaol and his family to ruin. Let us pity the misfortunes of genius and conspire against the publishing tyrants who oppress men of letters.
(*Pendennis*)

INNUENDO

A proposal to erect a large statue of Christ in the centre of Addis Ababa to 'symbolize the beginning of a new Christian era for Abyssinia' has been presented to the Italian Government by the Executive Committee of the Anti-Blasphemy Society, of which King Victor Emmanuel is honorary president.

A traveller arriving at Jibuti reports that a batch of chained Abyssinian prisoners awaiting execution at Addis Ababa were mown down by Italian machine guns when they tried to escape.
(*News Chronicle*, 20/5/36)

Honesty is the best policy but advertising also pays.
(JON HYDE)

ANTITHESIS

All his life you shall see these two. At his birth a cratch for the child, a star for the son. In his life hungry himself to show the nature of the child, yet feeding five thousand to show the power of the son. At his death dying on the cross as the Son of Adam, at the same time disposing of paradise as the Son of God.

(BISHOP ANDREWES : A sermon on the Child and the Son.

N.B.—'cratch' means 'cradle'.)

CLIMAX

The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early had been kind ; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent and cannot enjoy it ; till I am solitary and cannot impart it ; till I am known and do not want it.

(DR. JOHNSON : Letter to Lord Chesterfield)

ANTICLIMAX

Sooner let earth, air, sea to chaos fall,
Men, monkeys, lap-dogs, parrots perish all.

(POPE : *The Rape of the Lock*)

ALLITERATION

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free.

Haphazard from their shoulders hang the garments of the hawker—combining in their person the motley of many manners with the medley of the mummer's closet.

(WHISTLER : *Ten o'clock Lecture*. He is attacking certain dress reforms.)

PUN

Jack. It is very vulgar to talk like a dentist when one isn't a dentist. It produces a false impression.

Algernon. Well, that is exactly what dentists always do.

(WILDE : *The Importance of Being Earnest*)

When I am dead, I hope it may be said :

'His sins were scarlet, but his books were read.'

(HILAIRE BELLOC)

PARALLELISM

Wisdom for a man's self is in many branches thereof a depraved thing. It is the wisdom of rats, that will be sure to leave a house somewhat before it fall. It is the wisdom of the fox, that thrusts out the badger, who digged and made room for him. It is the wisdom of crocodiles, that shed tears when they would devour.

(BACON : *Essays*)

The play was indifferent, but that was nothing. The acting was bad, but that was nothing. The audience were low, but that was nothing. It was the heartless indifference and hearty contempt shown by the performers for their parts, and by the audience for the players and the play, that disgusted us with all of them.

(HAZLITT : *London Magazine*, March, 1820)

METONYMY

All the wealth of Ruritania supported the ruling house, for the insurgents were led by a communist.

The power of the press is incalculable.

SYNECDOCHE

Before long a fleet of fifty sail hove in sight.

OXYMORON

Bacchus, that first from out the purple grape
Crushed the sweet poison of misused wine.

(MILTON : *Comus*)

Melodious discord, heavenly tune harsh-sounding.

(SHAKESPEARE : *Venus and Adonis*)

HYPERBOLE

Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.

(SHAKESPEARE : *Macbeth*)

EXERCISE 2

Study the following passages and state what figures of speech are used :

(a) Their beauty cometh by nature, yours by art ; they increase their favours with fair water, you maintain yours with painters' colours ; the hair they lay out groweth upon their own heads, your seemliness hangeth upon others ; theirs is always in their own keeping, yours often in the dyer's ; their beauty is not lost with a sharp blast, yours fadeth with a soft breath ; not unlike unto paper flowers which break as soon as they are touched.

(LYLY : *Euphues*)

(b) If some king of the earth have so large an extent of dominion in North and South as that he hath winter and summer together in his dominions, so large an extent East and West as that he hath day and night together in his dominions, much more hath God mercy and judgment together : He brought light out of darkness, not out of a lesser light ; he can bring thy summer out of winter, though thou have no spring : though in the ways of fortune or understanding or conscience thou have been benighted till now, wintered and frozen, clouded and eclipsed, damped and benumbed, smothered and stupefied till now, now God comes to thee, not as in the dawning of the day, not as in the bud of the spring, but as the sun at noon to illustrate all shadows, as the sheaves in harvest to fill all penuries. All occasions invite his mercies and all times are his seasons.

(DONNE : Sermon preached at Paul's Cross on Christmas Day in the Evening, 1624)

(c) I am a part of all that I have met ;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,

To rust unburnished, not to shine in use !
 As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life
 Were all too little, and of one to me
 Little remains : but every hour is saved
 From that eternal silence, something more,
 A bringer of new things ; and vile it were
 For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
 And this grey spirit yearning in desire
 To follow knowledge, like a sinking star,
 Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

(TENNYSON : *Ulysses*)

(d) Cheer up then, O my soul ; and upon the fixed apprehension of the glory to be revealed, while thy weak partner, my body, droops and languishes under the sad load of years and infirmities, sing thou to thy God, even in the midnight of thy sorrows, and in the deepest darkness of death itself, songs of confidence, songs of spiritual joy, songs of praise and thanksgiving.

(BISHOP HALL : *Sermons*)

(e) Time hath, my lord, a wallet at his back,
 Wherein he puts alms for oblivion,
 A great-sized monster of ingritudes :
 Those scraps are good deeds past, which are devour'd
 As fast as they are made, forgot as soon
 As done. Persèverance, dear my lord,
 Keeps honour bright. To have done, is to hang
 Quite out of fashion, like a rusty mail
 In monumental mockery. Take the instant way ;
 For honour travels in a strait so narrow,
 Where one but goes abreast. Keep then the path ;
 For emulation hath a thousand sons
 That one by one pursue. If you give way,
 Or hedge aside from the direct forthright,
 Like to an enter'd tide they all rush by,
 And leave you hindmost :
 Or, like a gallant horse fallen in first rank,
 Lie there for pavement to the abject rear,
 O'er-run and trampled on. Then what they do in present,
 Though less than yours in past, must o'er-top yours.
 For time is like a fashionable host,
 That slightly shakes his parting guest by the hand,

And with his arms outstretched, as he would fly,
 Grasps-in the comer. Welcome ever smiles,
 And farewell goes out sighing. O let not virtue seek
 Remuneration for the thing it was ;
 For beauty, wit,
 High birth, vigour of bone, desert in service,
 Love, friendship, charity are subjects all
 To envious and calumniating time.

(SHAKESPEARE : *Troilus and Cressida*)

(f) A candle is that which is fated to die of consumption and makes light of its fate.

(HERBERT SPENCER)

(g) This room of theirs was a dingy room, very small but very high. A lanky gas tube swooped from the middle of the ceiling towards the middle of the table-cloth as if burning to discover whether that was pink or saffron or fawn—and it *was* hard to tell—but on perceiving that the cloth, whatever its tint, was disturbingly spangled with dozens of cup-stains and several large envelopes, the gas tube in the violence of its disappointment contorted itself abruptly, assumed a lateral bend and put out its tongue of flame at an oleograph of Mona Lisa which hung above the fireplace.

(A. E. COPPARD : *Fifty Pounds*)

(h) For an eel I have ventured to try
 By a method of Walton's own showing ;
 But a fisherman feels
 Little prospect of eels
 On a path that's devoted to towing.

(T. HOOD)

(i) Contiguous to Mr. Allworthy's estate was the manor of one of those gentlemen who are called preservers of the game. This species of men, from the great severity with which they revenge the death of a hare or a partridge, might be thought to cultivate the same superstition with the Bannians in India, many of whom, we are told, dedicate their whole lives to the preservation and protection of certain animals ; was it not that our English Bannians, while they preserve them from other enemies, will most unmercifully slaughter whole horseloads themselves ; so that they stand clearly acquitted of any such heathenish superstition.

(FIELDING : *Tom Jones*)

(j) We can conquer this world and the next by indifference to all who are indifferent to us ; by taking joyfully the benefit that comes spontaneously ; by wishing no more intensely for what is a hair's breadth beyond our reach than for a draught of water from the Ganges ; and by fearing nothing in another life. . . . While we insist that we are looking for Truth, we commit a falsehood. It never was the first object with any one, and with few the second.

(LANDOR : *Imaginary Conversations*)

(k) Nine souls more went in her : the long-boat still
Kept above water, with an oar for mast ;
Two blankets stitched together, answering ill
Instead of sail, were to the oar made fast :
Though every wave rolled menacing to fill,
And present peril all before surpass'd,
They grieved for those who perished with the cutter,
And also for the biscuit-casks and butter.

(BYRON : *Don Juan*)

(l) 'I wish I had said that,' he remarked once, approving of one of Whistler's witticisms. 'You will, Oscar ; you will !' was the reply.

(HOLBROOK JACKSON : *The 1890's*. 'He' is Oscar Wilde.)

(m) From the vehemence with which you deny my existence I am convinced that you believe in me.

(DOSTOEVSKY : *The Brothers Karamazov*. The Devil is talking to Ivan.)

(n) Men are but children of a larger growth.

(DRYDEN)

EXERCISE 3

Compare these two accounts of the death of Foulon, minister of finance just before the outbreak of the French Revolution. When asked, with reference to some scheme of his, 'What will the people do ?' he replied, 'The people may eat grass.' Later, to escape from the violence of the Paris mob he arranged an elaborate mock-funeral of himself, only to be caught and taken to Paris for trial.

(a) Merciless boors of Vitry unearth him ; pounce on him like hell-hounds : Westward, old Infamy ; to Paris, to be judged at the Hôtel-de-Ville ! His old head, which seventy-four years

have bleached, is bare ; they have tied an emblematic bundle of grass on his back ; a garland of nettles and thistles is round his neck : in this manner ; led with ropes ; goaded on with curses and menaces, must he, with his old limbs, sprawl forward ; the pitiableness, most unpitied of all old men.

Sooty Saint-Antoine, and every street, musters its crowds as he passes ; —the Hall of the Hôtel-de-Ville, the Place de Grève itself, will scarcely hold his escort and him. Foulon must not only be judged righteously, but judged there where he stands, without any delay. Appoint seven judges, ye Municipals, or seventy-and-seven ; name them yourselves, or we will name them : but judge him. Electoral rhetoric, eloquence of Mayor Bailly, is wasted, for hours, explaining the beauty of the Law's delay. Delay, and still delay ! Behold, O Mayor of the People, the morning has worn itself into noon : and he is still unjudged ! —Lafayette, pressingly sent for, arrives ; gives voice : This Foulon, a known man, is guilty almost beyond doubt ; but may he not have accomplices ? Ought not the truth to be cunningly pumped out of him,—in the Abbaye Prison ? It is a new light ! Sansculottism claps hands ; —at which handclapping Foulon (in his fainness, as his Destiny would have it) also claps. ' See ! they understand one another ! ' cries dark Sansculottism, blazing into fury of suspicion,—' Friends,' said a person in good clothes, stepping forward, ' what is the use of judging this man ? Has he not been judged these thirty years ? ' With wild yells, Sansculottism clutches him, in its hundred hands ; he is whirled across the Place de Grève, to the *Lanterne*, Lamp-iron which there is at the corner of the *Rue de la Vannerie* ; pleading bitterly for life, —to the deaf winds. Only with the third rope (for two ropes broke, and the quavering voice still pleaded), can he be so much as got hanged ! His Body is dragged through the streets ; his Head goes aloft on a pike, the mouth filled with grass : amid sounds as of Tophet, from a grass-eating people.

(CARLYLE : *The French Revolution*)

(b) This Foulon was at the Hôtel de Ville, and might be loosed. Never, if Saint Antoine knew his own sufferings, insults, and wrongs ! Armed men and women flocked out of the quarter so fast, and drew even these last dregs after them with such a force of suction, that within a quarter of an hour there was not a human creature in Saint Antoine's bosom but a few old crones and the wailing children.

No. They were all by that time choking the Hall of Examination where this old man, ugly and wicked, was, and overflowing into the adjacent open space and streets. The Defarges, husband and wife, the Vengeance, and Jacques Three, were in the first press, and at no great distance from him in the Hall.

‘See!’ cried madame, pointing with her knife. ‘See the old villain bound with ropes. That was well done to tie a bunch of grass upon his back. Ha, ha! That was well done. Let him eat it now!’ Madame put her knife under her arm, and clapped her hands as at a play.

The people immediately behind Madame Defarge, explaining the cause of her satisfaction to those behind them, and those again explaining to others, the neighbouring streets resounded to the clapping of hands. Similarly, during two or three hours of drawl, and the winnowing of many bushels of words, Madame Defarge’s frequent expressions of impatience were taken up, with marvellous quickness, at a distance: the more readily, because certain men who had by some wonderful exercise of agility climbed up the external architecture to look in from the windows, knew Madame Defarge well, and acted as a telegraph between her and the crowd outside the building.

At length the sun rose so high that it struck a kindly ray as of hope or protection, directly down upon the old prisoner’s head. The favour was too much to bear; in an instant the barrier of dust and chaff that had stood surprisingly long, went to the winds, and Saint Antoine had got him!

It was known directly, to the furthest confines of the crowd. Defarge had but sprung over a railing and a table, and folded the miserable wretch in a deadly embrace—Madame Defarge had but followed and turned her hand in one of the ropes with which he was tied—The Vengeance and Jacques Three were not yet up with them, and the men at the windows had not yet swooped into the Hall, like birds of prey from their high perches—when the cry seemed to go up, all over the city, ‘Bring him out! Bring him to the lamp!’

Down, and up, and head foremost on the steps of the building; now on his knees; now on his feet; now on his back; dragged, and struck at, and stifled by the bunches of grass and straw that were thrust into his face by hundreds of hands; torn, bruised, panting, bleeding, yet always entreating and beseeching for mercy; now full of vehement agony of action, with a small clear space about him as the people drew one another back that they

might see ; now, a log of dead wood drawn through a forest of legs ; he was hauled to the nearest street corner where one of the fatal lamps swung, and there Madame Defarge let him go—as a cat might have done a mouse—and silently and composedly looked at him while they made ready, and while he besought her : the women passionately screeching at him all the time, and the men sternly calling out to have him killed with grass in his mouth. Once, he went aloft, and the rope broke, and they caught him shrieking ; twice, he went aloft, and the rope broke, and they caught him shrieking ; then the rope was merciful, and held him, and his head was soon upon a pike, with grass enough in the mouth for all Saint Antoine to dance at the sight of.

(DICKENS : *A Tale of Two Cities*)

(i) *In what do the passages resemble each other and in what do they differ ?*

(ii) *Do you like one better than another ? If so, why ?*

(iii) *Do figures of speech help to make descriptive passages vivid ?*

(iv) *Give an account of the above incident as you might expect it to be described in a history text-book.*

(v) *Make use of the following facts to compile an account in the style of Carlyle :*

November 10, 1793 ; cold drizzle ; Bailly led through streets ; howling mob curse him, pelt with mud, wave over his face a half-burnt red flag ; he sits silent, unpitied, old, innocent ; they progress slowly and then reach the Champ-de-Mars ; mob say No ; that place is an Altar of the Fatherland ; kill him on dung heap by riverside. Officials listen to them. Guillotine taken down by numbed hands ; carried to riverside ; set up ; old man wearily awaits death ; hours pass ; mob cursing, rain cold as frost. Some one tells Bailly he is trembling. Bailly says it is for cold ; c'est de froid. No one had crueller ending.

EXERCISE 4

Study these two descriptions of tropical scenery :

(a) River, trees, flowers, birds, insects,—it was all a fairy-land : but it was a colossal one ; and yet the voyagers took little note of it. It was now an everyday occurrence to see trees full two hundred feet high one mass of yellow or purple blossom to the

highest twigs, and every branch and stem one hanging garden of crimson and orange orchids or vanillas. Common to them were all the fantastic and enormous shapes with which nature bedecks her robes beneath the fierce suns and fattening rains of the tropic forest. Common were forms and colours of bird, and fish, and butterfly, more strange and bright than ever opium-eater dreamed. The long processions of monkeys, who kept pace with them along the tree-tops, and proclaimed their wonder in every imaginable whistle, and grunt and howl, had ceased to move their laughter, as much as the roar of the jaguar and the rustle of the boa had ceased to move their fear. . . . Yes. The mind of man is not so 'infinite' in the vulgar sense of that word, as people fancy ; and however greedy the appetite for wonder may be, while it remains unsatisfied in everyday European life, it is as easily satiated as any other appetite, and then leaves the senses of its possessor as dull as those of a city gourmand after a Lord Mayor's feast. Only the highest minds can go on long appreciating where nature is insatiable, imperious, maddening, in her demands on our admiration. The very power of observing wears out under the rush of ever new objects . . . The man, too, who has not only eyes but utterance,—what shall he do where all words fail him? Superlatives are but inarticulate, after all, and give no pictures even of size any more than do numbers of feet and yards : and yet what else can we do but heap superlative on superlative, and cry, 'Wonderful, wonderful ! and after that wonderful, past all whooping' ?

KINGSLEY : (*Westward Ho*)

(b) To return to Sandakan. Besides a club and a golf course, it possesses four steam-rollers and a superbly metalled road, eleven miles long. At the eleventh milestone, the road collides with what seems an impenetrable wall of forest and comes abruptly to an end. You get out of your car and, examining the wall of verdure, find it flawed by a narrow crevice ; it is a path. You edge your way in and are at once swallowed up by the forest. The inside of Jonah's whale could scarcely have been hotter, darker or damper. True, the jungle monster sometimes opens its mouth to yawn ; there is a space between the trees, you have a glimpse of the sky, a shaft of thick yellow sunlight comes down into the depths. But the yawns are only brief and occasional. For the greater part of our stroll in the belly of the vegetable monster, we walked in a hot twilight. It was silent too. Very

occasionally a bird would utter a few notes—or it might have been a devil of the woods, meditatively whistling to himself, as he prepared some fiendishly subtle and ingenious booby trap to terrify the human trespassers on his domain.

Nature is all very well half-way to the pole. Kept on short rations, she behaves herself decorously. But feed her up, give her huge doses of the tonic tropical sunlight, make her drunk with tropical rain, and she gets above herself. If Wordsworth had been compelled to spend a few years in Borneo, would he have loved nature as much as he loved her on the banks of Rydal Water? If the *Excursion* had been through equatorial Africa, instead of through Westmorland, old William's mild pantheism would have been, I suspect, a little modified.

It was with a feeling of the profoundest relief that I emerged again from the green gullet of the jungle and climbed into the waiting car. The Chinese chauffeur started the machine and we drove away, very slowly (for in Sandakan you hire a car by the hour, not by the mile ; the drivers are marvellously cautious), we drove positively majestically down the eleven-mile road. I thanked God for steam-rollers and Henry Ford.

(ALDOUS HUXLEY : *Jesting Pilate*)

- (i) *Which description do you prefer? Why?*
- (ii) *Do you think both writers are describing what they have seen? If not, which of them is relying on information, and how can you tell?*
- (iii) *Do the passages throw any light on the personality of the authors?*
- (iv) *Wordsworth has something to say about the effect of tropical scenery on character. Read his poem entitled 'Ruth', and then decide what you would say if asked to discuss what we mean by nature.*
- (v) *Write a description of polar scenery in imitation of both authors.*

CHAPTER VII

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

O CRITICS, cultured Critics !
Who will praise me after I am dead,
Who will see in me both more and less than I intended,
But who will swear that whatever it was it was all perfectly
right :
You will think you are better than the people who, when I was
alive, swore that whatever I did was wrong
And damned my books for me as fast as I could write them ;
But you will not be better, you will be just the same, neither
better nor worse,
And you will go for some future Butler as your fathers have gone
for me.
Oh ! How I should have hated you !

In these words Samuel Butler voices a common complaint against critics. Many a time they have depreciated the work of contemporary artists who were destined to become famous. For example, Mozart's quartets were dubbed ' hideous stuff ' and Bach's B minor Mass lay untreasured for a hundred years after his death. In the same way much of Wordsworth's simple poetry was dismissed as unintelligible, while one critic dismissed *The Ancient Mariner* as ' a rhapsody of unintelligible wildness and incoherence, of which we do not perceive the drift, unless the joke lies in depriving the guest of his share of the feast '.

The reason probably is that most people are conservative and conventional, and view with suspicion anything that is new, especially as it requires an effort to think along new

lines. Yet the fact that time has so often reversed the critic's judgement should warn us against coming to hasty conclusions. 'True judgement,' writes Dryden, 'in poetry, like that in painting, takes a view of the whole together, whether it be good or not; and where the beauties are more than the faults, concludes for the poet against the little judge.' Bear this in mind while you are working the next exercises.

EXERCISE I

The following appeared in 'Poems by William Wordsworth', published in 1807:

TO THE CUCKOO

O blithe new-comer, I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice.
O Cuckoo, shall I call thee bird,
Or but a wandering voice?

While I am lying on the grass
Thy twofold shout I hear;
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off and near.

Though babbling only to the vale
Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the spring!
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery.

The same whom in my school-boy days
I listened to; that cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush and tree and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
 Through woods and on the green ;
 And thou wert still a hope, a love ;
 Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet ;
 Can lie upon the plain
 And listen, till I do beget
 That golden time again.

O blessed bird ! the earth we pace
 Again appears to be
 An unsubstantial faery place ;
 That is fit home for thee.

(i) 'A rapturous mystical ode in which the author, striving after force and originality, produces nothing but absurdity.' That is the criticism which appeared in Volume XI of the 'Edinburgh Review', the same year. What do you think?

(N.B.—Wordsworth had already stated in a preface to the second edition of 'Lyrical Ballads' (1800) that he deliberately chose 'incidents and situations from common life' as his themes, and that his aim was 'to imitate and, as far as possible, to adopt the very language of men'.)

(ii) Answer these further questions :

(a) Wordsworth believed, as we have already seen, that 'there neither is nor can be any essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition'. Is this applicable to the poem about the cuckoo?

(b) Is the poem likely to appeal to the country reader more than to the town reader?

(c) Does Wordsworth appear to love the cuckoo for sentimental reasons? Quote any words that support this suggestion.

EXERCISE 2

The critics who attacked Wordsworth had been brought up on the elegant poetry of the eighteenth century. For them Pope was the pattern of all that a poet should be, largely because of his correct

and precise diction. Here is an extract from one of Pope's poems to compare with the work of a modern writer :

Our plenteous streams a various race supply,
The bright eyed perch with fins of Tyrian dye,
The silver eel, in shining volumes roll'd,
The yellow carp, in scales bedropp'd with gold,
Swift trouts, diversified with crimson stains,
And pikes, the tyrants of the watery plains.

(Windsor Forest)

Clear by the tricklings of the dam,
Ruddy-finned roach and bronze carp swam ;
With here and there a perch blue-barred,
And two foot down a moody pike,
Looking with small eyes, small and hard,
At the shoals that lay a yard away,
But far too glutted and drowsy to strike.

(EDMUND BLUNDEN : *The River House*)

- (i) *Which of the two is the more natural ? What makes it so ?*
- (ii) *Are Pope's adjectives well chosen ?*
- (iii) *Turn Pope's passage into a piece of good modern prose, making it as rhythmical as possible.*
- (iv) *For what subjects do you think Pope's neat couplets would be eminently suitable ?*
- (v) *Compose ten lines in imitation of Pope and entitled ' The Dunce '.*

EXERCISE 3

One writer who departed from his contemporaries' choice of subjects was George Crabbe. Although in many ways a product of the eighteenth century (he has been described as a ' Pope in worsted stockings '), he chose humble, often sordid, themes. In a long poem entitled ' The Borough ' there is this description of a tenement occupied by debased creatures :

That window view !—oiled paper and old glass
Stain the strong rays, which, though impeded, pass,
And give a dusty warmth to that huge room,
The conquered sunshine's melancholy gloom ;

When all those western rays, without so bright,
 Within become a ghastly glimmering light,
 As pale and faint upon the floor they fall,
 Or feebly gleam on the opposing wall :
 That floor, once oak, now pieced with fir unplanned,
 Or, where not pieced, in places bored and stained ;
 That wall once whitened, now an odious sight,
 Stained with all hues, except its ancient white ;
 The only door is fastened by a pin,
 Or stubborn bar, that none may hurry in :
 For this poor room, like rooms of greater pride,
 At times contains what prudent men would hide. . . .
 On swinging shelf are things incongruous stored,—
 Scraps of their food,—the cards and cribbage-board,—
 With pipes and pouches ; while on peg below,
 Hang a lost member's fiddle and its bow ;
 That still reminds them how he'd dance and play,
 Ere sent untimely to the Convicts' Bay. . . .
 Each end contains a grate, and these beside
 Are hung utensils for their boiled and fried—
 All used at any hour, by night, by day,
 As suit the purse, the person, or the prey.
 Above the fire, the mantel-shelf contains
 Of china-ware some poor unmatched remains ;
 There many a tea-cup's gaudy fragment stands,
 All placed by vanity's unwearied hands. . . .
 High hung at either end, and next the wall,
 Two ancient mirrors show the forms of all,
 In all their force ;—these aid them in their dress,
 But with the good, the evils too express,
 Doubling each look of care, each token of distress.

Hazlitt wrote this criticism of Crabbe's style :

' Our author is himself a little jealous of the prudish fidelity of his homely Muse, and tries to justify himself by precedents. He brings as a parallel instance of merely literal description, Pope's lines on the gay Duke of Buckingham. But surely nothing can be more dissimilar. Pope describes what is striking : Crabbe would have described merely what was there. The objects in Pope stand out to the fancy from the mixture of the mean with the gaudy, from the contrast of the scene and the character. There is an appeal to the imagination ; you see what is passing in

a poetical point of view. In Crabbe there is no foil, no contrast, no impulse given to the mind. It is all on a level and of a piece.'

These are the lines of Pope :

In the worst inn's worst room, with mat half-hung,
The floors of plaster, and the walls of dung,
On once a flock-bed, but repair'd with straw,
With tape-tied curtains, never meant to draw,
The George and Garter dangling from that bed
Where tawdry yellow strove with dirty red,
Great Villiers lies—alas ! how changed from him,
That life of pleasure, and that soul of whim !
Gallant and gay, in Cliveden's proud alcove,
The bower of wanton Shrewsbury and love ;
Or just as gay, at council, in a ring
Of mimic statesmen, and their merry king.
No wit to flatter left of all his store !
No fool to laugh at, which he valued more.
There, victor of his health, of fortune, friends,
And fame ; this lord of thousand useless ends.

(N.B.—Cliveden : a palace built by the Duke on the Thames.
Shrewsbury : Countess whose husband was killed by
Buckingham in a duel ; she is said to have dressed as
a page and held the Duke's horse during the duel.)

(i) *Judging from the extract describing the tenement, do you think Hazlitt's criticism is just ?*

(ii) *What is realism ? Why is it so often associated with the ugly or the sordid ? Has the poet any justification in describing sordid scenes, apart from the contrast which Hazlitt seems to think essential ?*

(iii) *What similarities are there between Crabbe's versification and Pope's ?*

(iv) *Pope and Crabbe wrote heroic couplets. What are they ? Why 'heroic' ?*

EXERCISE 4

So here some pick out bullets from the side,
Some drive old oakum through each seam and rift :
Their left hand does the caulking-iron guide,
The rattling mallet with their right they lift.

With boiling pitch another near at hand,
 From friendly Sweden brought, the seams instops,
 Which well paid o'er the salt sea waves withstand
 And shake them from the rising beak in drops.

Some the galled ropes with dauby marling bind
 Or sear-cloth masts with strong tarpauling coats :
 To try new shrouds one mounts into the wind
 And one below their ease or stiffness notes.

(DRYDEN : *Annus Mirabilis*)

(i) *Johnson, in his life of Dryden, takes him to task for using technical terms in his description of the battle against the Dutch. Referring to such words as oakum, seam, caulking-iron, Johnson says, 'I suppose there is not one term which every reader does not wish away.' What is your opinion?*

(ii) *Compare Dryden's use of technical terms with John Masefield's in 'Dauber'.*

(iii) *Explain the meaning of the difficult words in the stanzas from 'Annus Mirabilis'. (N.B.—Sear-cloth (usually spelt cere-cloth) is used as a verb in the extract.)*

(iv) *Is the novelist justified in using technical terms? Refer in your answer to what you have read.*

EXERCISE 5

Try to express as clearly as possible what this poem means : in your answer imagine you are anxious to convince a friend that the poem is not 'all nonsense' :

THE CANDLE INDOORS

Some candle clear burns somewhere I come by.
 I muse at how its being puts blissful back
 With yellowy moisture mild night's blear-all black,
 Or to-fro tender trambeams truckle at the eye.
 By that window what task what fingers ply,
 I plod wondering, a-wanting, just for lack
 Of answer the eagerer a-wanting Jessy or Jack
 There God to aggrandise, God to glorify.—

Come you indoors, come home ; your fading fire
 Mend first and vital candle in close heart's vault :
 You there are master, do your own desire ;
 What hinders ? Are you beam-blind, yet to a fault
 In a neighbour deft-handed ? are you that liar
 And, cast by conscience out, spendsavour salt ?
 (GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS)

EXERCISE 6

In one of his poems Mr. E. E. Cummings describes his first drive in a new motor-car as follows :

she being Brand

-new ; and you
 know consequently a
 little stiff i was
 careful of her and (having

thoroughly oiled the universal
 joint tested my gas felt of
 her radiator made sure her springs were O.
 K.) i went right to it flooded-the-carburetor cranked her

up, slipped the
 clutch (and then somehow got into reverse she
 kicked what
 the hell) next
 minute i was back in neutral tried and

again slo-wly ; bare, ly nudg. ing (my

lev-er Right-
 oh and her gears being in
 A 1 shape passed
 from low through
 second-in-to-high like
 greasedlightning just as we turned the corner of Divinity
 avenue i touched the accelerator and give
 her the juice, good

was the first ride and believe i we was
happy to see how nice she acted right up to
the last minute coming back down by the Public
Gardens i slammed on
the

internalexpanding
&
externalcontracting
brakes Bothatonce and

brought allofher tremB
-ling
to a : dead.

stand-
; Still)

(i) *Is this a good description?*

(ii) *Can you think why Mr. Cummings punctuates as he does?*
What relation has the punctuation to the subject?

(iii) *Imagine you are on the staff of a newspaper and are told by the editor to review this poem. Your article is to appear on the literary page. What would you write?*

EXERCISE 7

‘The less you understand of a language, the more sensible you are to the melody or harshness of its sounds.’ So says De Quincey, referring to the delight with which he listened to Italian women talking, although he knew not a word of their language. Is this applicable to poems in English? In other words, is the poet justified in concentrating on the sound rather than the sense? Test your opinion by referring to the following extract:

O Lyric Love, half-angel and half-bird
And all a wonder and a wild desire,—
Boldest of hearts that ever braved the sun,
Took sanctuary within the holier blue,
And sang a kindred soul out to his face,—
Yet human at the red-ripe of the heart—

When the first summons from the darkling earth
Reach'd thee amid thy chambers, blanch'd their blue,
And bared them of the glory—to drop down,
To toil for man, to suffer or to die,—
This is the same voice : can thy soul know change ?
Hail then, and hearken from the realms of help !
Never may I commence my song, my due
To God who best taught song by gift of thee,
Except with bent head and beseeching hand—
That still, despite the distance and the dark,
What was, again may be ; some interchange
Of grace, some splendour once thy very thought,
Some benediction anciently thy smile :
—Never conclude, but raising hand and head
Thither where eyes, that cannot reach, yet yearn
For all hope, all sustainment, all reward,
Their utmost up and on,—so blessing back
In those thy realms of help, that heaven thy home,
Some whiteness which, I judge, thy face makes proud,
Some wanness where, I think, thy foot may fall !

(BROWNING : *The Ring and the Book*)

CHAPTER VIII

PROSE STYLE

IN Chapter II we discussed briefly the difference between prose form and verse form. Later chapters have shown that passages in prose form or verse form can differ markedly, since no two authors will treat similar themes in the same way. For example, Pope's description of fish differed from that of the observant nature-lover, Mr. Blunden. Kingsley's picture of a tropical forest seems extravagant by the side of Mr. Huxley's. It is obvious therefore that a passage can be examined in two ways : first, with regard to its subject matter, and secondly, with regard to the treatment of that matter.

The pointed rod with which the ancients wrote on wax-coated tablets was called a style. This has come to mean, 'manner of writing or speaking, especially as opposed to the matter'. If we remember this definition we shall see without difficulty that prose or verse style depends in the main on two things : choice of words and arrangement of those words in groups (phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs).

Choosing the right words is analogous to choosing the right material for some handiwork : velvet for the peer's robe, worsted for a lounge suit ; ivory for the dainty statuette, granite for Watts's equestrian statue. In addition, the material must be used to the best advantage or some of it may be wasted and the remainder be ill-shaped. In this chapter we shall confine ourselves to

examples of prose style and try to find out a few of the ways in which writers, to use a vivid remark of an Elizabethan, Nashe, distil gold out of ink.

EXERCISE I

Study these passages :

(a) The Abbé Fanfreluche, having lighted off his horse, stood doubtfully for a moment beneath the ombre gateway of the mysterious Hill, troubled with an exquisite fear lest a day's travel should have too cruelly undone the laboured niceness of his dress. His hand, slim and gracious as La Marquise du Deffand's in the drawing by Carmontelle, played nervously about the gold hair that fell upon his shoulders like a finely-curved peruke, and from point to point of a precise toilet the fingers wandered, quelling the little mutinies of cravat and ruffle.

It was taper-time ; when the tired earth puts on its cloak of mists and shadows, when the enchanted woods are stirred with light footfalls and slender voices of the fairies, when all the air is full of delicate influences, and even the beaux, seated at their dressing-tables, dream a little. A delicious moment, thought Fanfreluche, to slip into exile.

(AUBREY BEARDSLEY : *Under the Hill*)

(b) It is a true sublimity to dwell here. These fringes of lamplight, struggling up through smoke and thousandfold exhalation, some fathoms into the ancient reign of Night, what thinks Boötes of them, as he leads his Hunting-Dogs over the Zenith in their leash of sidereal fire ? That stifled hum of Midnight, when Traffic has lain down to rest ; and the chariot-wheels of Vanity, still rolling here and there through distant streets, are bearing her to halls roofed-in, and lighted to the due pitch for her ; and only Vice and Misery, to prowl or moan like nightbirds, are abroad : that hum, I say, like the stertorous, unquiet slumber of sick Life, is heard in Heaven ! Oh, under that hideous coverlet of vapours, and putrefactions, and unimaginable gases, what a Fermenting-vat lies simmering and hid ! The joyful and the sorrowful are there ; men are dying there, men are being born ; men are praying,—on the other side of a

brick partition, men are cursing ; and around them all is the vast, void Night.

(CARLYLE : *Sartor Resartus*)

(i) *What is the most obvious contrast between the passages? Illustrate by referring to choice of words and to sentence construction.*

(ii) *What effect have Carlyle's punctuation and his use of capitals? Which of the writers do you think believed in art for art's sake?*

(iii) *Which passage do you prefer, and why? Or do you feel that both styles are exaggerated?*

(iv) *Attempt a description of dawn in each style.*

* * *

A famous French writer, Flaubert, believed that style depended on securing the unique word. This led him to pay meticulous attention not merely to a single epithet but also to the rhythm of a whole book. This is a doctrine of perfection unattainable by most of us ; but we can at least take to heart the advice of Pater, a writer much impressed by Flaubert's search for the unique word. 'Say what you have to say,' writes Pater, 'what you have a will to say, in the simplest, the most direct and exact manner possible, with no surplusage.'

This does not mean that the writer is to make no use of ornament : he is to be careful in his use of it. To strengthen his argument Pater quotes Schiller : 'The artist may be known rather by what he omits.' That perhaps explains why the journalist so often fails. He lacks either the time or the inclination to remove the surplusage, with the result that he writes verbiage.

Not only are journalists to blame. Writers on technical subjects often obscure their meaning by hazy wording. An excellent example of such jargon was quoted in a letter to the Editor of *The Times*. The quotation referred to the habits of a moth :

It would appear from what evidence is available that the act of oviposition is immediately stimulated by the crepuscular

diminution in the intensity of illumination, and the rise in relative humidity as the diurnal temperature decreases.

EXERCISE 2

- (i) *Turn the above passage into clear and simple English.*
- (ii) *Why is the original ineffective?*
- (iii) *What is meant by Johnsonese?*
- (iv) *Write a short article entitled 'In Defence of Big Words'.*

* * *

Choice of words and order of words—these are the two important elements of style. In both you should aim at clearness and variety. Use long words if you are sure of their meaning and they are rhythmically apt ; but remember Pater's caution about being direct. Pick your words without fear or favour from any source likely to give you the finest medium of expression. It used to be the fashion to urge writers to use none but words of Teutonic origin ; but a second's thought will show you that *begin* is not necessarily a better word than *commence*, or *end* than *finish*. Your choice should be determined by the value of the word in relation to the sentence or paragraph. For the most effective writer is one who puts the right word in the right place. Let us apply this to some passages by well-known authors.

EXERCISE 3

Here, in the Palace, the air was close and heavy, but in the forest the wind blew free, and the sunlight with wandering hands of gold moved the tremulous leaves aside. There were flowers, too, in the forest, not so splendid, perhaps, as the flowers in the garden, but more sweetly scented for all that ; hyacinths in early spring that flooded with waving purple the cool glens, and grassy knolls ; yellow primroses that nestled in little clumps round the gnarled roots of the oak-trees ; bright celandine, and blue speedwell, and irises lilac and gold. There were grey catkins on the hazels, and the foxgloves drooped with the weight

of their dappled bee-haunted cells. The chestnut had its spires of white stars, and the hawthorn its pallid moons of beauty.

(OSCAR WILDE : *A House of Pomegranates*)

- (i) *Make a list of the colours mentioned in this passage.*
- (ii) *What are the colours of the rainbow?*
- (iii) *What colour are the following?*

the underside of willow leaves ; ash buds ; apple blossom ; the bark of the silver birch ; blackthorn blossom ; rowan berries ; alabaster ; amber ; gentian ; ormolu ; basalt ; roan ; weather-worn copper ; damask rose ; satinwood ; crème de menthe ; ebony ; jade ; Canadian maple ; cygnet ; duckling ; terra cotta ; porphyry ; maroon.

- (iv) *Write a description of the following, introducing colours to give effect to each passage :*

storm at sea ; landscape at harvest time ; garden in summer ; cathedral with sun shining through windows ; aviary at the Zoo ; military tattoo ; pageant of medieval England ; country lane in spring ; congregation in village church ; scene on race course.

EXERCISE 4

Comment on the choice of words and their arrangement in the following passages :

- (a) This is philosophy : to make remote things tangible, common things extensively useful ; useful things extensively common, and to leave the least necessary to the last.

(LANDOR : *Imaginary Conversations*)

- (b) If the gods did indeed bestow on us a portion of their fire, they seem to have lighted it in sport and left it ; the harder task and the nobler is performed by that genius who raises it clear and glowing from its embers, and makes it applicable to the purposes that dignify and delight our nature.

(Ibid.)

- (c) That nature is always right is an assertion, artistically, as untrue as it is one whose truth is universally taken for granted. Nature is very rarely right, to such an extent even, that it might almost be said that nature is usually wrong. Seldom does nature succeed in producing a picture . . . And when the evening

mist clothes the riverside with poetry, as with a veil, and the poor buildings lose themselves in the dim sky, and the tall chimneys become campanili, and the warehouses are palaces in the night, and the whole city hangs in the heavens, and fairyland is before us—then the wayfarer hastens home ; the working man and the cultured one, the wise man and the one of pleasure, cease to understand, as they have ceased to see, and Nature who, for once, has sung in tune, sings her exquisite song to the artist alone, her son and her master—her son in that he loves her, her master in that he knows her.

(WHISTLER : *Ten o'clock Lecture*)

(d) How easy it is to shed human blood—how easy it is to persuade ourselves that it is our duty to do so—and that the decision has cost us a severe struggle—how much in all ages have wounds and shrieks and tears been the cheap and vulgar resources of the rulers of mankind—how difficult and how noble it is to govern in kindness and to found an empire upon the everlasting basis of justice and affection !—But what do men call vigour ? To let loose hussars and to bring up artillery, to govern with lighted matches and to cut and push and prime—I call this not vigour, but the sloth of cruelty and ignorance.

(SYDNEY SMITH : *Peter Plymley's Letters*, No. IX)

(e) There was the largest possible audience at Queen's Hall last night for a Brahms concert at which Sir Henry Wood conducted the C minor symphony and the Violin Concerto. A forceful and strongly coloured performance was given of the symphony, exciting the audience to great enthusiasm. The quotation from Hermann Deiters in the programme note on this work, by the way, is a shade misleading in its description of the Alpine horn call in the finale as consisting of 'elusive notes from undiscoverable lips that blow an unmaterial horn'. The 'elusive' notes are purely diatonic, the undiscoverable lips are discoverable by all but the short-sighted as those of Mr. Aubrey Brain, and that fine artist's instrument is constructed of the usual material.

(MUSIC CRITIC : *Daily Telegraph*, Sept. 7, 1933)

(f) (An enquirer) might descend to depths unthinkable, he might sink into sunken continents as strange as remote stars, he might find himself in the inside of the world as far from men as the other side of the moon ; he might see in those cold chasms

or colossal terraces of stone, traced in the faint hieroglyphic of the fossil, the ruins of lost dynasties of biological life, rather like the ruins of successive creations and separate universes than the stages in the story of one. He would find the trail of monsters developing in directions outside all our common imagery of fish and bird ; groping and grasping and touching life with every extravagant elongation of horn and tongue and tentacle ; growing a forest of fantastic caricatures of the claw and the fin and the finger. But nowhere would he find one finger that had traced one significant line upon the sand ; nowhere one claw that had even begun to scratch the faint suggestion of a form.

(G. K. CHESTERTON : *The Everlasting Man*)

(g) Evidently the gate is never opened : for the long grass and the great hemlocks grow close against it ; and if it were opened it is so rusty that the force necessary to turn it on its hinges would be likely to pull down the square, stone-built pillars, to the detriment of the stone lionesses which grin with a doubtful carnivorous affability above a coat of arms surmounting each of the pillars. It would be easy enough, by the aid of nicks in the stone pillars, to climb over the brick wall with its smooth stone coping ; but by putting our eyes close to the rusty bars of the gate we can see the house well enough, and all but the very corners of the grassy enclosure.

It is a very fine old place, of red brick, softened by a pale powdery lichen, which has dispersed itself with happy irregularity so as to bring the red brick into terms of friendly companionship with the lime-stone ornaments surrounding the three gables, the windows, and the doorplace. But the windows are patched with wooden panes, and the door, I think, is like the gate—it is never opened : how it would groan and grate against the stone floor if it were ! For it is a solid, heavy, handsome door, and must once have been in the habit of shutting with a sonorous bang behind a liveried lackey, who had just seen his master or mistress off the grounds in a carriage and pair.

(GEORGE ELIOT : *Adam Bede*)

(h) Recount, O Muse, the names of those who fell on this fatal day. First, Jemmy Tweedle felt on his hinder head the direful bone. Him the pleasant banks of sweetly-winding Stour had nourished, where he first learned the vocal art, with which wandering up and down at wakes and fairs, he cheered the rural nymphs and swains, when upon the green they interweaved the

sprightly dance ; while he himself stood fiddling and jumping to his own music. How little now avails his fiddle ! He thumps the verdant floor with his carcase. Next, old Echepole received a blow on his forehead from our Amazonian heroine, and immediately fell to the ground. He was a swinging fat fellow, and fell with almost as much noise as a house. His tobacco-box dropped at the same time from his pocket, which Molly took up as lawful spoils. Then Kate of the Mill tumbled unfortunately over a tombstone, which, catching hold of her ungartered stocking inverted the order of nature, and gave her heels the superiority to her head. Betty Pippin, with young Roger her lover, fell both to the ground, where, O perverse fate ! she salutes the earth, and he the sky. Tom Freckle, the smith's son, was the next victim to her rage. He was an ingenious workman, and made excellent pattens : nay, the very patten with which he was knocked down was his own workmanship. Had he been at that time singing psalms in the church, he would have avoided a broken head. Miss Crow, the daughter of a farmer ; John Giddish, himself a farmer ; Nan Slouch, Esther Codling, Will Spray, Tom Bennet ; the three Misses Potter, whose father keeps the sign of the Red Lion ; Betty Chambermaid, Jack Ostler, and many others of inferior note, lay rolling among the graves.

Not that the strenuous arm of Molly reached all these ; for many of them in their flight overthrew each other.

(FIELDING : *Tom Jones*)

EXERCISE 5

Write the following passages :

- (a) *on electric light, in imitation of Whistler.*
- (b) *on capital punishment, in imitation of Sydney Smith.*
- (c) *on the vastness of the universe, in imitation of G. K. Chesterton.*

EXERCISE 6

The sea lay bare of wreckage, as it lay bare of hope. Glassy silence stretched on either side. Glassy depths imaged the crazy boat. There was no land. It had disappeared beneath the cataract that sent the vessel plunging downwards. The earth was without form and void, and darkness—No, not darkness. Let there be light and there was light. Pitiless light. Better the

storm clouds ; better almost the darkness of the typhoon than this withering light. Where had he read of such torture ? He remembered now—a prison. In Germany or Italy ? Or was it England ? A cell six feet each way. A brilliant lamp burning hour by endless hour. Burning near the prisoner's eye. Burning till it seemed that some one flake by flake pared off the iris and seared the nerves with white-hot wires. These were the sun's rays. Molten metal. It flooded in upon him from brow to breast. His spirit drooped, his soul wilted. The waves flamed up at him. All around the fire, and he the human slag-heap.

(i) *Do you think that is a good description of the thoughts in the mind of a man afloat in a small boat after being wrecked ?*

(ii) *What is the effect of the short sentences ? For what purposes in general are short sentences useful ?*

(iii) *Write a passage on one of the following subjects :*

- (a) *Parachutist unable to pull the rip cord.*
- (b) *Extract from last letter of man condemned to death.*
- (c) *Housebreaker at work on a chimney stack.*
- (d) *Inexperienced driver in a traffic jam.*
- (e) *Bather caught in river weeds.*
- (f) *Villager fleeing from volcanic eruption.*
- (g) *Native terrified by eclipse of the sun.*

EXERCISE 7

Recast the facts in Exercise 4 (h), first as an article written by a capable journalist and secondly as a letter written by an eye-witness.

EXERCISE 8

De Quincey has told us that the mail-coach made a vivid impression on him. He gives five reasons for this : the speed, at that time unprecedented ; the ' grand effects for the eye between lamp-light and the darkness upon solitary roads ' ; animal beauty and power ; ' the conscious presence of a central intellect that overruled all obstacles into one steady co-operation to a national result ' ; the political mission the coach fulfilled, bringing news of Trafalgar and other victories. The railway he considered a poor substitute for the coach ; and he has left this protest on record :

But now, on the new system of travelling, iron tubes and boilers have disconnected man's heart from the ministers of his locomotion. Nile nor Trafalgar has power to raise an extra bubble in a steam-kettle. The galvanic cycle is broken up for ever ; man's imperial nature no longer sends itself forward through the electric sensibility of the horse ; the inter-agencies are gone in the mode of communication between the horse and his master, out of which grew so many aspects of sublimity under accidents of mists that hid, or sudden blazes that revealed, of mobs that agitated, or midnight solitudes that awed. Tidings, fitted to convulse all nations, must henceforwards travel by culinary process ; and the trumpet that once announced from afar the laurelled mail, heart-shaking, when heard screaming on the wind, and proclaiming itself through the darkness to every village or solitary house on its route, has now given way for ever to the pot-walloppings of the boiler.

(The English Mail-coach)

(i) *Is this an expressive statement of his disgust? What makes it so?*

(ii) *Would De Quincey change his mind if he could see one of the latest expresses?*

(iii) *What is the force of 'pot-walloppings'? Look up the word in a big dictionary.*

(iv) *Write a passage in imitation of De Quincey on (a) modern fashions as compared with those of the eighteenth century, (b) ploughing with a tractor instead of horses.*

(v) *Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of substituting motors for horses in everyday life : write as simply as you can, concentrating your attention upon the argument.*

EXERCISE 9

In a previous chapter we noticed how difficult it was for some early writers to express themselves when dealing with technical matters. A writer from whom they might have learned an excellent lesson was Hooker. Although born as early as 1554 and living in an age when prose was in the experimental stage, he manages his sentences capably and very wisely aims at a simple style. There are few figures of speech in his great work, 'The Laws of Ecclesi-

astical Polity' : Hooker prefers to reason calmly and convincingly, choosing his words so as to give the fullest force to his defence of the Church established by Elizabeth.

Study the following passage :

Let the church of Rome be what it will, let them that are of it be the people of God and our fathers in the Christian faith, or let them be otherwise ; hold them for catholics or hold them for heretics ; it is not a thing either one way or other in this present question greatly material. Our conformity with them in such things as have been proposed is not proved as yet unlawful by all this. St. Augustine hath said, yea and we have allowed his saying, that the custom of the people of God and the decrees of our forefathers are to be kept, touching those things whereof the Scripture hath neither one way or other given us any charge. What then ? Doth it here therefore follow, that they being neither the people of God nor our forefathers, are for that cause in nothing to be followed ? This consequent were good if so be it were granted that only the custom of the people of God and the decrees of our forefathers are in such case to be observed. But then should no other kind of latter laws in the Church be good ; which were a gross absurdity to think. St. Augustine's speech therefore doth import that where we have no divine precept, if yet we have the custom of the people of God or a decree of our forefathers, this is a law and must be kept. Notwithstanding it is not denied but that we lawfully may observe the positive constitutions of our own churches, although the same were but yesterday made by ourselves alone. Nor is there anything in this to prove that the church of England might not by law receive orders, rites or customs from the church of Rome, although they were neither the people of God nor yet our forefathers. How much less when we have received from them nothing, but that which they did themselves receive from such as we cannot deny to have been the people of God, yea such as either we must acknowledge for our own forefathers or else disdain the race of Christ ?

(i) *State Hooker's argument, reducing your version to a third of Hooker's.*

(ii) *Which of the sentences are easy to follow, and which are difficult ? Why ?*

(iii) *Choose three sentences and modernize them.*

CHAPTER IX

DIFFERENT VERSIONS

MANY a joke has been made at the expense of a foreigner struggling with the difficulties of English ; and when we are abroad some of our attempts to speak the language of our hosts must appear equally amusing. The trouble seems to be that only after years of study can we understand the principles according to which words are formed and ideas expressed in a foreign language ; and intimate acquaintance with that language is necessary before we can use idiomatic phrases correctly. Hence the smile when a French Count in a Wodehouse novel tells us that he is ' as well as a violin ', and asks us ' to do him a good twist '. Hence also the smile when a German is reported to have said to a waitress : ' I am here since ten minutes : when do I become a veal cutlet ? '

It is just as difficult to translate into English a passage in a foreign language. Indeed, translation tests our command of two languages, for our work will suffer unless our knowledge of English is thorough. Furthermore, translation tests our imaginative power. We must rely on this to steer us midway between the plodding accuracy of a literal version and the exuberant fancy of a free adaptation. Only the person who is accurate, fluent, and imaginative will seize on the essential features of some passage and reproduce it in well-chosen words.

Let us take an example from Virgil's *Aeneid*. After escaping from the destruction of Troy by the Greeks, Aeneas sailed westwards. His journey brought him to

Carthage, where he was amazed to discover, in a temple, paintings of the Trojan war. The fame of this war had spread throughout the world, and Aeneas wept to see the pictured sufferings of his countrymen. Yet he was comforted by the artist's evident sympathy with the vanquished Trojans. Courage in defeat was here rewarded, for it had stirred the imagination of a distant painter to lament the downfall of an ancient race and the unhappy lot of mortals.

Sunt hic sua praemia laudi,
Sunt lacrimae rerum, et mentem mortalia tangunt.

This is a literal translation of Aeneas' words :

Here also are fame's own rewards : here are tears for (our) affairs and mortal things touch the mind.

Compare these translations :

Here too worth finds its due reward ; here too there are tears for human fortune, and hearts that are touched by mortality.
(JOHN CONINGTON)

E'en here do noble deeds
Win their own recompense, here trouble hath
Her tears, and here men's sorrows touch the heart.

(T. H. DELABERE MAY)

These examples will suffice to show how varied the translations of a poetic passage may be. Each has its merits, but probably none can convey to us precisely what Virgil's words conveyed to an educated Roman. In his *Defence of Poetry* Shelley maintains that it is impossible to do this : ' It were as wise to cast a violet into a crucible that you might discover the formal principle of its colour and odour as seek to transfuse from one language into another the creations of a poet.'

If we recollect how difficult it sometimes is to understand the meaning of an English poet, we shall be inclined to agree with Shelley. Still, the attempt is worth making ; and our aim must be to interpret a given passage as accurately as possible and express the thought in words that grace it.

EXERCISE I

It took Odysseus ten years to reach his island home of Ithaca after the fall of Troy. Towards the end of his journey his ship sank, his comrades perished, and he himself was saved only by the intervention of Ino, a sea-nymph. He was washed ashore near the palace of Alcinous, King of Phaeacia, who entertained him. In a well-known passage Homer describes the garden of Alcinous. Study these translations of that passage :

(a) And without the courtyard hard by the door is a great garden, of four plowgates, and a hedge runs round on either side. And there grow tall trees blossoming, pear trees and pomegranates, and apple trees with bright fruit, and sweet figs, and olives in their bloom. The fruit of these trees never perisheth, neither faileth, winter or summer, enduring through all the year. Evermore the West Wind blowing brings some fruits to birth and ripens others. Pear upon pear waxes old, and apple on apple, yea and cluster ripens upon cluster of the grape, and fig upon fig. There too hath he a fruitful vineyard planted, whereof the one part is being dried by the heat, a sunny plot on level ground, while other grapes men are gathering, and yet others they are treading in the wine press. In the foremost row are unripe grapes that cast the blossom, and others there be that are growing black to vintaging. There too, skirting the furthest line, are all manner of garden beds, planted trimly, that are perpetually fresh, and therein are two fountains of water, whereof one scatters his streams all about the garden, and the other runs over against it beneath the threshold of the courtyard, and issues by the lofty house, and thence did the townsfolk draw water. These were the splendid gifts of the gods in the palace of Alcinous.

(Translation by BUTCHER and LANG)

(b) From outside the court, by its entry, extends a great garden of four acres, fenced each way. In it flourish tall trees : pears or pomegranates, stone fruits gaudy with their ripening loads, also sweet figs and heavy-bearing olives. The fruit of these trees never blights or fails to set, winter and summer, through all the years. A west wind blows there perpetually, maturing one crop and making another. Pear grows old upon pear and

apple upon apple, with bunch after bunch of grapes and fig after fig. Here, too, a fertile vineyard has been planted for the King. A part of this lies open to the sun, whose rays bake its grapes to raisins, while men gather ripe grapes from the next part and in a third part tread out the perfected vintage in wine-presses. On one side are baby grapes whose petals yet fall ; on another the clusters empurple towards full growth. Beyond the last row of trees, well laid garden plots have been arranged, blooming all the year with flowers. And there are two springs, one led throughout the orchard-ground, whilst the other dives beneath the sill of the great court to gush out beside the stately house : from it the citizens draw their water. Such were the noble gifts the gods had lavished upon the palace of Alcinous.

(Translation by T. E. LAWRENCE)

- (c) Close to the gates a spacious garden lies,
From storms defended, and inclement skies.
Four acres was the allotted space of ground,
Fenced with a green enclosure all around ;
Tall thriving trees confess'd the fruitful mould ;
The reddening apple ripens here to gold :
Here the blue fig with luscious juice o'erflows,
With deeper red the full pomegranate glows,
The branch here bends beneath the weighty pear,
And verdant olives flourish round the year.
The balmy spirit of the western gale
Eternal breathes on fruits untaught to fail :
Each dropping pear a following pear supplies,
On apples apples, figs on figs arise :
The same mild season gives the blooms to blow,
The buds to harden, and the fruits to grow.
Here order'd vines in equal ranks appear,
With all the united labours of the year :
Some to unload the fertile branches run,
Some dry the blackening clusters in the sun,
Others to tread the liquid harvest join,
The groaning presses foam with floods of wine.
Here are the vines in early flower descried,
Here grapes discolour'd on the sunny side,
And there in autumn's richest purple dyed.
Beds of all various herbs, for ever green,
In beauteous order terminate the scene.

Two plenteous fountains the whole prospect crown'd ;
 This through the gardens leads its streams around,
 Visits each plant, and waters all the ground ;
 While that in pipes beneath the palace flows,
 And thence its current on the town bestows :
 To various use their various streams they bring,
 The people one, and one supplies the king.
 Such were the glories which the gods ordain'd,
 To grace Alcinous, and his happy land.

(Translation by POPE)

(i) *Which of these passages is the most straightforward? Which do you like best? Which appears to be the freest translation?*

(ii) *Matthew Arnold maintained that these four qualities distinguished Homer : rapidity, plainness and directness of style and diction, plainness and directness of ideas, nobleness. Which of the translations most clearly suggests these qualities?*

EXERCISE 2

*The following is a simple translation of a poem by Horace :
 You will live more rightly, Licinus, by neither always plunging into the deep nor keeping too near the unpropitious shore, while warily you shudder at the storm. Whoever loves the golden mean keeps at a safe distance from the shabbiness of a ruinous building, and wisely avoids a hall that may expose him to envy. More often it is the tall pine that is shaken by the winds, and lofty towers fall with heavier crash, while thunderbolts strike the summits of the mountains. A balanced judgement, when things are adverse, hopes for a change of condition, and fears it when things are prosperous. Jupiter brings back hideous winter, but also takes it away. If all goes badly now, it will not always be thus. Apollo sometimes rouses the silent muse with his lyre : he does not always stretch his bow. In misfortune show yourself spirited and brave ; you will wisely also reef your swelling sails in a wind that is too favourable.*

(i) *Summarize in your own words Horace's advice.*

(ii) *Recast the passage in imitation of any of the passages in the first exercise.*

(iii) Which of the three forms best suits Horace's sententious remarks?

EXERCISE 3

In his tenth Satire the Roman poet Juvenal deplores the vanity of ambition. Men pray for success, but this often is their downfall. Power begets envy, and few tyrants die a natural death. The spoils of war may be attractive, but the greatest victor is eventually put in a coffin. Beauty has many a time proved fatal to its possessor, and a long life brings its own sorrows. It is better to let the gods decide what is best for you, and to pray for a sound mind in a sound body. A bold heart scorns death and luxury alike, and this you can procure for yourself.

Dr. Johnson based 'The Vanity of Human Wishes' on this satire, and in the following extract he deals with the troubles of old age :

'Enlarge my life with multitude of days !'
In health, in sickness, thus the suppliant prays :
Hides from himself his state, and shuns to know
That life protracted is protracted woe.
Time hovers o'er, impatient to destroy,
And shuts up all the passages of joy :
In vain their gifts the bounteous seasons pour,
The fruit autumnal, and the vernal flow'r ;
With listless eyes the dotard views the store,
He views, and wonders that they please no more ;
Now pall the tasteless meats and joyless wines,
And Luxury with sighs her slave resigns.
Approach, ye minstrels, try the soothing strain,
Diffuse the tuneful lenitives of pain :
No sounds, alas ! would touch th' impervious ear,
Though dancing mountains witness'd Orpheus near ;
Nor lute nor lyre his feeble pow'rs attend,
Nor sweeter music of a virtuous friend.
But everlasting dictates crowd his tongue,
Perversely grave, or positively wrong ;
The still returning tale, and ling'ring jest,
Perplex the fawning niece and pamper'd guest,

While growing hopes scarce awe the gath'ring sneer,
 And scarce a legacy can bribe to hear :
 The watchful guests still hint the last offence,
 The daughter's petulance, the son's expense ;
 Improve his heady rage with treach'rous skill,
 And mould his passions till they make his will.

(i) *Summarize this passage in clear prose.*

(ii) *Does Johnson give a fair picture of old age? Or do you associate it, as Shakespeare does, with 'honour, love, obedience, troops of friends'? Write a character sketch entitled 'The Old Man'.*

(iii) *To illustrate the folly of military ambition Juvenal referred to Hannibal, Alexander, Xerxes. Find out something about these three leaders, and then write a paragraph purporting to be a translation of Juvenal.*

* * *

Thieves' slang, or 'cant', as spoken in the nineteenth century is virtually a foreign language. It is derived largely from gipsy language, but includes words of Old English, Latin, and French origin. Equally difficult to understand are two other forms of slang, known as rhyming and back-slang. In the former, some word that rhymes with the one intended is used, with the result that only the speaker's associates can understand him. The latter, much used by costermongers, is a reversal of the letters of each word.

The following, quoted in the sixth volume of *Parodies*, collected by W. Hamilton, will give you some idea of thieves' slang :

I buzzed a bloak and a shakester of a reader and a skin. My jomer stalled. A cross cove, who had his regulars, called out 'cop bung' ; so as a pig was marking, I speeled to the crib, where I found Jim had been pulling down sawney for grub. He cracked a case last night and fenced the swag. He told me as Bill had flimped a yack and pinched a swell of a fawney : he sent the yack to church and got three finnups and a cooter for the fawney.

This is the translation :

I picked the pockets of a gentleman and lady of a pocket book and a purse. My fancy girl screened me from observation. A fellow thief, who shared my plunder, called out to me to hand over the stolen property ; so as some one was observing my actions, I ran off to the house, where Jim had some bacon he had stolen from a shop door. He broke into a house last night, and had sold the stolen property. He told me that Bill had hustled a man and stolen his watch, and had also robbed a gentleman of a ring. He had sent the watch to have its works removed, and had got three five pound notes and a sovereign for the ring.

EXERCISE 4

Translate the following :

THE SONG OF THE YOUNG PRIG
My Mother she dwelt in Dyot's Isle (1),
One of the Canting Crew (2), sirs ;
And if you'd know my father's style,
He was the Lord Knows-who, sirs !
I first held horses in the street,
But being found defaulter,
Turned rumbler's flunkey (3) for my meat,
So was brought up to the halter.

Frisk the cly (4), and fork the rag (5),
Draw the fogles plummy (6),
Speak to the tattler (7), bag the swag (8),
And finely hunt the dummy (9).

My name they say is Young Birdlime,
My fingers are fish-hooks, sirs ;
And I my reading learnt betime,
From studying pocket-books, sirs.
I have a sweet eye for a plant (10),
And graceful as I amble,
Finedraw a coat-tail sure I can't,
So kiddy is my famble (11).

Chorus. Frisk the cly, &c.

A night bird (12), oft I'm in the cage (13),
 But my rum chants ne'er fail, sirs,
 The dubsman's (14) senses to engage,
 While I tip him leg-bail (15), sirs.
 There's not, for picking, to be had
 A lad so light and larky,
 The cleanest angler on the pad (16),
 In daylight or the darkey.

Chorus. Frisk the cly, &c.

And though I don't work capital (17),
 And do not weigh my weight (18), sirs,
 Who knows but that in time I shall,
 For there's no queering fate, sirs.
 If I'm not lagged to Virgin-nee (19),
 I may a Tyburn show be,
 Perhaps a tip-top cracksman (20) be
 Or go on the high toby (21).

Chorus. Frisk the cly, etc.

(CHARLES HINDLEY : *The Life and Times of James Catnach*)

Notes : (1) Dyot Street, in St. Giles's Rookery, a haunt of thieves. (2) Beggars. (3) Hackney coachman's handy-man. (4) Pick a pocket. (5) Secure notes or money. (6) Steal handkerchiefs neatly. (7) Steal a watch. (8) Pocket the chain and seals. (9) Look for pocket-book or pouch. (10) Planned robbery. (11) My hand is so skilful. (12) Disorderly vagabond. (13) Lock-up. (14) Gaoler. (15) Escape. (16) Expert pick-pocket. (17) Commit crime punishable with death. (18) Fine payable on capital conviction. (19) Be transported. (20) House-breaker. (21) Highwayman.

* * *

Some of the finest passages of English prose occur in the Authorized Version of the Bible. This remarkable translation was made by six different groups of scholars, working with headquarters at Oxford, Cambridge, and Westminster. They spent nearly three years on the translation, and nine months on revision. In addition to the manuscripts available, they had before them Tyndale's translations,

the first of which appeared in 1526, Coverdale's Paris Bible (1538), the Great Bible (1539), the Geneva Bible (1560), and the Bishops' Bible (1568).

EXERCISE 5

Study these three versions of a passage from Isaiah, Chapter 60 :

(a) And therefore get thee up betimes, for thy light cometh, and the glory of the Lord shall rise up upon thee. For lo ! while the darkness and clouds covereth the earth and the people, the Lord shall shew thee light, and his glory shall be seen in thee. The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness that springeth forth upon thee. . . . Thy sun shall never go down, and thy moon shall never be taken away ; but the Lord himself shall be thy everlasting light, and thy God shall be thy glory. The sun shall never be thy daylight, and the light of the moon shall never shine unto thee ; for the Lord himself shall be thine everlasting light, and thy sorrowful days shall be rewarded thee.

(COVERDALE)

(b) Get thee up betimes and be bright, O Jerusalem ; for thy light cometh, and the glory of the Lord is risen up upon thee. For lo ! while the darkness and cloud covereth the earth and the people, the Lord shall shew thee light, and his glory shall be seen in thee. The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness that springeth forth upon thee. . . . The sun shall never be thy daylight, and the light of the moon shall never shine upon thee ; but the Lord himself shall be thine everlasting light, and thy God shall be thy glory. Thy sun shall never go down, and thy moon shall not be hid ; for the Lord himself shall be thine everlasting light, and thy sorrowful days shall be ended.

(BISHOPS' BIBLE)

(c) Arise, shine ; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people : but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. . . . The sun shall be no more thy light by day ; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee : but

the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down ; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself : for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

(Authorized Version)

(i) *Which of these passages is the most rhythmical? What makes it so?*

(ii) *What contrast in sound effects is obtained by a varied choice of vowels? Are consonants equally important in this passage?*

(iii) *Recast the passage in modern English.*

(iv) *What do you think is gained or lost by modernizing the Bible?*

* * *

Many writers have tried to modernize the work of an earlier period. Dryden, for instance, thought that Chaucer was 'a rough diamond, and must first be polished ere he shines'. It is true that many of Chaucer's words are obsolete, and so a glossary is necessary for a complete understanding of most of his poems. Yet there is a grave danger that the modernization may rob the passage of its effectiveness. This is certainly true of one stanza in the *Ballad of Chevy Chase*. The author laments the death of many a hero whom he names, among them one called Wetharington :

For Wetharryngton my harte was wo,
That even he slayne shulde be ;
For when both his leggis wer hewyne in two,
He knyled and fought on hys knee.

This has been modernized as follows :

For Widdrington needs must I wail,
As one in doleful dumps ;
For when his legs were smitten off,
He fought upon his stumps.

The second line of this version is sheer nonsense, while the fourth suggests the ending of a music-hall song.

Let us see how Dryden 'polishes' Chaucer.

EXERCISE 6

One of the Canterbury Tales is about a cock and a hen, Chanticleer and Pertelote. Chanticleer had a dream which presaged some disaster. Pertelote poured scorn upon his fears and argued that his liver was out of order. Whereupon Chanticleer learnedly quoted such authorities as Cato, Macrobius, Daniel, and the Venerable Bede to prove to his sceptical wife that dreams were sent to warn us of impending danger. By this time it was daylight and the widow who owned the cock and hens unbarred the door to let her live-stock out into the yard. In a short time Chanticleer was persuaded by a lurking fox to give an exhibition of his singing. As he stood on his toes with neck outstretched, the fox seized him and made off. This is Chaucer's description of the commotion that followed :

This sely widwe, and eek hir doghtres two
 Herden thise hennès crye and maken wo,
 And out at dorès sterten they anoon,
 And syen the fox toward the grovè goon,
 And bar upon his bak the cok away ;
 And cryden, ' Out ! harrow ! and weylaway !
 Ha, ha, the fox ! ' and after him they ran,
 And eek with stavès many another man ;
 Ran Colle our dogge, and Talbot, and Gerland,
 And Malkin with a distaf in hir hand ;
 Ran cow and calf, and eek the verray hogges
 So were they fered for berking of the dogges
 And shouting of the men and wimmen eke,
 They ronnè so, hem thoughte hir hertè breke.
 They yelleden as feendès doon in helle ;
 The dokès cryden as men wolde hem quelle ;
 The gees for ferè flowen over the trees ;
 Out of the hyvè cam the swarm of bees ;
 So hidous was the noyse, a ! *benedicite* !
 Certès, he Jakkè Straw, and his meynee,
 Ne madè never shoutès half so shrille,
 Whan that they wolden any Fleming kille,
 As thilkè day was maad upon the fox.
 Of bras thay broghten bemès, and of box,

Of horn, of boon, in whiche they blewe and pouped,
 And therewithal thay shrykèd and they houped ;
 It semèd as that heven sholdè falle.

Sely : simple. Hem thoughte : it seemed to them. As men wolde : as if some one were going to. Quelle : kill. Jakke Straw : a leader in the Peasant Revolt. Bemes : trumpets, horns. Box : boxwood.

This is Dryden's version :

Now to my story I return again :
 The trembling widow, and her daughters' twain,
 This woful cackling cry with horror heard,
 Of those distracted damsels in the yard ;
 And starting up, beheld the heavy sight,
 How Reynard to the forest took his flight,
 And cross his back, as in triumphant scorn,
 The hope and pillar of the house was borne.
 The fox, the wicked fox, was all the cry ;
 Out from his house ran every neighbour nigh :
 The vicar first, and after him the crew,
 With forks and staves the felon to pursue.
 Ran Coll our dog, and Talbot with the band,
 And Malkin, with her distaff in her hand :
 Ran cow and calf, and family of hogs,
 In panic horror of pursuing dogs ;
 With many a deadly grunt and doleful squeak,
 Poor swine, as if their pretty hearts would break.
 The shouts of men, the women in dismay,
 With shrieks augment the terror of the day.
 The ducks, that heard the proclamation cried,
 And feared a persecution might betide,
 Full twenty mile from town their voyage take,
 Obscure in rushes of the liquid lake.
 The geese fly o'er the barn ; the bees, in arms,
 Drive headlong from their waxen cells in swarms.
 Jack Straw at London-stone, with all his rout,
 Struck not the city with so loud a shout ;
 Not when with English hate they did pursue
 A Frenchman, or an unbelieving Jew ;

Not when the welkin rung with *one and all*,
And echoes bounded back from Fox's hall ;
Earth seemed to sink beneath, and heaven above to fall.
With might and main they chaced the murd'rous fox,
With brazen trumpets, and inflated box,
To kindle Mars with military sounds,
Nor wanted horns to inspire sagacious hounds.

one and all : Dryden is referring to the cry raised during riots in his own time.

- (i) *What liberties has Dryden taken with the original ?*
- (ii) *Contrast his use of adjectives with Chaucer's.*
- (iii) *Has Dryden taken care to find accurate substitutes for difficult words ? Give some examples.*
- (iv) *Which of the two passages is the more vivid ? Choose some words, phrases or lines to illustrate your answer.*
- (v) *Indicate in tabular form some of the noticeable differences between the language of Chaucer and Dryden.*
- (vi) *In the Oxford Dictionary find out all you can about these words : silly, quell, methinks, welkin.*
- (vii) *Modernize the passage by Chaucer as effectively as you can, either choosing your own form and phraseology or taking as your model John Masefield's 'Reynard the Fox'.*

CHAPTER X

NATURE IN VERSE AND PROSE

THE Norman Conquest was important for more than military reasons. Old English poetry tended to be didactic, religious, gloomy ; and it required the grafting of southern gaiety on rugged Saxon stock to produce the fine flower of later English poetry.

Before the middle of the twelfth century Provençal minstrels were singing of love, of the dance, of adventure. A favourite setting for a poem was spring time : a spring morning for eager delight, while tenderer thoughts found a fit setting to the strains of the nightingale by the light of the moon. Translations of such songs proved popular in England after the Conquest. Translation was followed by adaptation, and that again by original composition. Perhaps the earliest example is the famous little poem beginning, ' Sumer is i-cumen in '. This well illustrates the hold that nature by this time had on the affection of the poets.

Moreover, we must remember that apart from the preference shown by the Provençal singer for the spring time, the merry month of May marked the end of winter hardships, which in medieval England must have made life almost unbearable. Let us consider for a moment our modern comforts. Cosy fires, deep arm-chairs, electric reading-lamps, and a varied choice of books—what more could we want on a winter's evening ? And if we are forced to go out, at least the streets are well lighted and the surface safe for walking or motoring. But in medieval days the house was no snug refuge from the cold. Clumsy ventilation meant that you sat near the fire to keep warm,

only at the risk of blearing your eyes or burning your clothes ; wooden furniture meant hard lines on tired limbs ; tallow candles were a luxury few could afford ; and the scarcity of books can be judged from the fact that a small Bible cost £30 in modern money. The roads were usually in bad repair, there were no pavements, and in the darkness of the unlit streets there lurked ' aspyers . . . waiting men for to beaten or to slayen '. These, and many other interesting facts, you can find for yourself in *Chaucer's England*, by G. G. Coulton.

So spring and summer were hailed with genuine delight by all, and the poets never tired of extolling their charms. Later poets studied nature more closely or worshipped more intently at her shrine. When prose came into its own, descriptions of nature soon appeared in new form. Practice made perfect ; with the result that prose writers to-day confidently vie with poets in describing nature's beauty or interpreting her harsher moods. Let us see how a few have approached this subject.

EXERCISE I

Read the following extracts :

- (a) A garden saw I, ful of blosmy bowès,
Upon a river, in a grenè mede,
Ther as that swetnesse evermore y-now is,
With flourès whytè, blewè, yelowè and redè ;
And coldè wellè-stremès, no-thing dedè,
That swommen ful of smalè fisshès lightè,
With finnès rede and scalès silver-brightè.

On every bough the briddès herde I singè,
With voys of aungel in hir armonyè,
Some besyed hem hir briddès forth to bringè ;
The litel conyes to hir pley gunne hyè,
And further al aboute I gan espyè
The dredful roo, the buk, the hert and hinde,
Squerels, and bestès smale of gentil kinde.

(CHAUCER : *The Parlement of Foules*)

Y-now : enough. Conyes : rabbits. Dredful roo : timid roe.

(b) It was a chosen plot of fertile land,
 Emongst wide waves set, like a little nest,
 As if it had by Nature's cunning hand
 Been choisely pickèd out from all the rest,
 And laid forth for ensample of the best :
 No daintie flowre or herbe, that growes on ground,
 No arboret with painted blossomes drest,
 And smelling sweet, but there it might be found
 To bud out faire, and her sweet smels throw all around.

No tree, whose braunches did not bravely spring ;
 No braunch, whereon a fine bird did not sit ;
 No bird, but did her shrill notes sweetly sing ;
 No song, but did containe a lovely dit :
 Trees, braunches, birds, and songs were framed fit,
 For to allure fraile mind to carelesse ease.
 Carelesse the man soon woxe, and his weak wit
 Was overcome of thing that did him please ;
 So pleasèd, did his wrathfull purpose faire appease.
 (SPENSER : *Faerie Queene*)

(i) Which do you think is the better description of a pleasant scene? Or do the passages differ so greatly that comparison is impossible?

(ii) Who appears to be the simpler nature-lover, Chaucer or Spenser? Why?

(iii) Find out something about rhyme royal and the Spenserian stanza; then attempt to modernize one of the passages in its appropriate metre.

EXERCISE 2

Study these two passages :

(a) To be sure, it was a deserted place, down to the pigeon-house in the brewery-yard, which had been blown crooked on its pole by some high wind, and would have made the pigeons think themselves at sea, if there had been any pigeons there to be rocked by it. But there were no pigeons in the dove-cot, no horses in the stable, no pigs in the sty, no malt in the store-house, no smells of grains and beer in the copper or the vat. All the uses and scents of the brewery might have evaporated with

its last reek of smoke. In a by-yard there was a wilderness of empty casks, which had a certain sour remembrance of better days lingering about them ; but it was too sour to be accepted as a sample of the beer that was gone.

Behind the furthest end of the brewery was a rank garden with an old wall : not so high but that I could struggle up and hold on long enough to look over it, and see that the rank garden was the garden of the house, and that it was overgrown with tangled weeds, but that there was a track upon the green and yellow paths, as if some one sometimes walked there. . . .

We went into a gloomy room with a low ceiling, on the ground floor at the back. There was some company in the room, and Estella said to me as she joined it, ' You are to go and stand there, boy, till you are wanted.' ' There ' being the window, I crossed to it, and stood ' there ', in a very uncomfortable state of mind, looking out.

It opened to the ground, and looked into a most miserable corner of the neglected garden, upon a rank ruin of cabbage-stalks, and one box-tree that had been clipped round long ago, like a pudding, and had a new growth at the top of it, out of shape and of a different colour, as if that part of the pudding had stuck to the saucepan and got burnt. This was my homely thought, as I contemplated the box-tree. There had been some light snow, overnight, and it lay nowhere else to my knowledge ; but it had not quite melted from the cold shadow of this bit of garden, and the wind caught it up in little eddies and threw it at the window, as if it pelted me for coming there. . . .

I strolled into the garden, and strolled all over it. It was quite a wilderness, and there were old melon-frames and cucumber-frames in it, which seemed in their decline to have produced a spontaneous growth of weak attempts at pieces of old hats and boots, with now and then a weedy offshoot into the likeness of a battered saucepan.

When I had exhausted the garden and a greenhouse with nothing in it but a fallen-down grape-vine and some bottles, I found myself in the dismal corner upon which I had looked out of the window.

(DICKENS : *Great Expectations*)

(b) The house was left ; the house was deserted. It was left like a shell on a sandhill to fill with dry salt grains now that life had left it. The long night seemed to have set in ; the trifling

airs, nibbling, the clammy breaths, fumbling, seemed to have triumphed. The saucepan had rusted and the mat decayed. Toads had nosed their way in. Idly, aimlessly, the swaying shawl swung to and fro. A thistle thrust itself between the tiles in the larder. The swallows nested in the drawing-room ; the floor was strewn with straw ; the plaster fell in shovelfuls ; rafters were laid bare ; rats carried off this and that to gnaw behind the wainscots. Tortoise-shell butterflies burst from the chrysalis and pattered their life out on the window-pane. Poppies sowed themselves among the dahlias ; the lawn waved with long grass ; giant artichokes towered among roses ; a fringed carnation flowered among the cabbages ; while the gentle tapping of a weed at the window had become, on winters' nights, a drumming from sturdy trees and thorned briars which made the whole room green in summer.

What power could now prevent the fertility, the insensibility of nature ? Mrs. McNab's dream of a lady, of a child, of a plate of milk soup ? It had wavered over the walls like a spot of sunlight and vanished. She had locked the door ; she had gone. It was beyond the strength of one woman, she said. They never sent. They never wrote. There were things up there rotting in the drawers—it was a shame to leave them so, she said. The place was gone to rack and ruin. Only the Lighthouse beam entered the rooms for a moment, sent its sudden stare over bed and wall in the darkness of winter, looked with equanimity at the thistle and the swallow, the rat and the straw. Nothing now withstood them ; nothing said no to them. Let the wind blow ; let the poppy seed itself and the carnation mate with the cabbage. Let the swallow build in the drawing-room and the thistle thrust aside the tiles, and the butterfly sun itself on the faded chintz of the arm-chairs. Let the broken glass and the china lie out on the lawn and be tangled over with grass and wild berries.

(VIRGINIA WOOLF : *To the Lighthouse*)

(N.B.—Mrs. McNab was the caretaker. In the preceding paragraphs she had been recollecting the happy days, now gone, when Mrs. Ramsay, the owner's wife, might be seen in her old grey gardening dress, with one of her children beside her. Mrs. McNab remembered how kind she was, having on one occasion told cook to keep a plate of milk soup for Mrs. McNab, because the washing she had just brought up in a basket from town must have been very heavy.)

(i) Which of the descriptions gives you (a) the more detailed picture, (b) the deeper impression of loneliness?

(ii) What is the main difference between Miss Virginia Woolf's style and Dickens's? Quote from each passage in your answer.

'Life instinct with death'—in which passage is this the more haunting theme? Why?

(iii) Compare these passages with Swinburne's 'A Forsaken Garden' and state what differences you notice.

(iv) Suppose a friend of the Ramsays unexpectedly comes across their house ten years after the period referred to in the above description. The house has been untenanted all the time. Write the letter he sends to one of the family describing the scene.

EXERCISE 3

In a previous chapter you were given two descriptions of tropical scenery in prose: here are two in verse:

The mountain wooded to the peak, the lawns
And winding glades high up like ways to Heaven,
The slender coco's drooping crown of plumes,
The lightning flash of insect and of bird,
The lustre of the long convolvuluses,
That coil'd around the stately stems, and ran
Ev'n to the limit of the land, the glows
And glories of the broad belt of the world,
All these he saw; but what he fain had seen
He could not see, the kindly human face,
Nor even hear a kindly voice, but heard
The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-fowl,
The league-long roller thundering on the reef,
The moving whisper of huge trees that branch'd
And blossom'd in the zenith, or the sweep
Of some precipitous rivulet to the wave,
As down the shore he ranged, or all day long
Sat often in the seaward-gazing gorge,
A shipwreck'd sailor waiting for a sail:
No sail from day to day, but every day
The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts
Among the palms and ferns and precipices;

The blaze upon the waters to the east ;
The blaze upon his island overhead ;
The blaze upon the waters to the west ;
Then the great stars that globed themselves in Heaven,
The hollower-bellowing ocean, and again
The scarlet shafts of sunrise—but no sail.

(TENNYSON : *Enoch Arden*)

Beside the ungather'd rice he lay,
His sickle in his hand ;
His breast was bare, his matted hair
Was buried in the sand.
Again, in the mist and shadow of sleep,
He saw his Native Land.

Wide through the landscape of his dreams
The lordly Niger flowed ;
Beneath the palm-trees on the plain
Once more a king he strode ;
And heard the tinkling caravans
Descend the mountain-road.

He saw once more his dark-eyed queen
Among her children stand ;
They clasp'd his neck, they kissed his cheeks,
They held him by the hand !
A tear burst from the sleeper's lids
And fell into the sand.

And then at furious speed he rode
Along the Niger's bank ;
His bridle reins were golden chains,
And, with a martial clank,
At each leap he could feel his scabbard of steel
Smiting his stallion's flank.

Before him, like a blood-red flag,
The bright flamingoes flew ;
From morn till night he followed their flight,
O'er plains where the tamarind grew,
Till he saw the roofs of Caffre huts,
And the ocean rose to view.

At night he heard the lion roar,
And the hyena scream,
And the river-horse, as he crush'd the reeds
Beside some hidden stream ;
And it passed, like a glorious roll of drums
Through the triumph of his dreams.

(LONGFELLOW : *The Slave's Dream*)

(i) Which do you consider to be the more effective description ?
Give your reason.

(ii) Do you think either poet had visited the tropics ?

(iii) Which of the two poets is (a) the more artistic, (b) the more likely to make an immediate appeal ?

EXERCISE 4

The following account of a storm is taken from one of the long-winded romances popular in the seventeenth century :

The day being fair at their departure continued not long so, for the Heaven willing to cause the earth drink healths to their bon voyage, did by impetuous showers send it water enough to drink : the sky, which intended to look chearfully at Eliza's nuptials, did by wind and rain purge itself of all its malignant humours ; Heaven's bottles having at last emptied themselves by these furious showers, the sky did cover its face by a vail of mist, whereby the coachman's horizon was abridged to the length of two or three paces at most, Providence intending by the hand of this darkness to lead them out of that natural darkness wherein their ignorance had enveloped them.

(SIR GEORGE MACKENZIE : *Aretina*)

Contrast this with a passage from ' David Copperfield ' :

As the night advanced, the clouds closing in and densely overspreading the whole sky, then very dark, it came on to blow, harder and harder. It still increased, until our horses could scarcely face the wind. Many times, in the dark part of the night (it was then late in September, when the nights were not short), the leaders turned about, or came to a dead stop ; and we were often in serious apprehension that the coach would be blown over. Sweeping gusts of rain came up before this storm,

like showers of steel ; and at these times, when there was any shelter of trees or lee walls to be got, we were fain to stop, in a sheer impossibility of continuing the struggle.

(i) *Why is the extract from 'Aretina' ineffective? Improve on it.*

(ii) *Can you improve on Dickens's description? If so, in what way?*

(iii) *What do you think is meant by composing with one's eye on the object?*

(iv) *Study this description of a sunset preceding a typhoon :*

At its setting the sun had a diminished diameter and an expiring brown, rayless glow, as if millions of centuries elapsing since the morning had brought it near its end. A dense bank of cloud became visible to the northward ; it had a sinister dark olive tint, and lay low and motionless upon the sea, resembling a solid obstacle in the path of the ship. She went floundering towards it like an exhausted creature driven to its death. The coppery twilight retired slowly, and the darkness brought out overhead a swarm of unsteady, big stars, that, as if blown upon, flickered exceedingly and seemed to hang very near the earth.

(JOSEPH CONRAD : *Typhoon*)

With that as your model describe this scene : low headland, forest to the left and volcano in between : thunder clouds, but contrasting expanse of clear sky above : one reddish star : evening.

EXERCISE 5

Read this passage carefully :

For all other rivers there is a surface, and an underneath, and a vaguely displeasing idea of the bottom. But the Rhone flows like one lambent jewel ; its surface is nowhere, its ethereal self is everywhere, the iridescent rush and translucent strength of it blue to the shore, and radiant to the depth.

Fifteen feet thick, of not flowing, but flying water ; not water, neither,—melted glacier, rather, one should call it ; the force of the ice is with it, and the wreathing of the clouds, the gladness of the sky, and the continuance of Time.

Waves of clear sea are, indeed, lovely to watch, but they are

always coming or gone, never in any taken shape to be seen for a second. But here was one mighty wave that was always itself, and every fluted swirl of it, constant as the wreathing of a shell. No wasting away of the fallen foam, no pause for gathering of power, no helpless ebb of discouraged recoil ; but alike through bright day and lulling night, the never-pausing plunge, and never-fading flash, and never-hushing whisper, and, while the sun was up, the ever-answering glow of unearthly aquamarine, ultramarine, violet-blue, gentian-blue, peacock-blue, river-of-paradise blue, glass of a painted window melted in the sun, and the witch of the Alps flinging the spun tresses of it for ever from her snow.

(RUSKIN : *Praeterita*)

(i) *Do you like Ruskin's description or not? Give your reasons.*

(ii) *Do you think he had watched the Rhone? What makes you think so?*

(iii) *Pick out two examples of a climax.*

(iv) *Look up the meaning of lambent, ethereal, iridescent, translucent (what about transparent?), fluted, aquamarine, ultramarine, gentian.*

(v) *Suggest other colour sequences in imitation of Ruskin's 'blues' : e.g. to describe a sunset, or foliage in autumn.*

EXERCISE 6

The weather that day was truly national. A silent, dim, distanceless, steaming, rotting day in March. The last brown oak-leaf which had stood out the winter's frost spun and quivered plump down, and then lay ; as if ashamed to have broken for a moment the ghastly stillness, like an awkward guest at a great dumb dinner-party. A cold suck of wind just proved its existence, by toothache on the north side of all faces. The spiders, having been weather-bewitched the night before, had unanimously agreed to cover every brake and brier with gossamer-cradles, and never a fly to be caught in them ; like Manchester cotton-spinners madly glutting the market in the teeth of 'no demand'. The steam crawled out of the dank turf, and reeked off the flanks and nostrils of the shivering horses, and clung with clammy paws to frosted hats and dripping boughs. A soulless, skyless, catarrhal day, as if that bustling dowager, old mother Earth

—what with matchmaking in spring, and fêtes-champêtres in summer, and dinner-giving in autumn—was fairly worn out, and put to bed with the influenza, under wet blankets and the cold-water cure.

(KINGSLEY : *Yeast*)

- (i) *Do you think that is effective or not? Give your reasons.*
- (ii) *Examine Kingsley's style. What use does he make of figures of speech?*
- (iii) *What serves to date the passage?*
- (iv) *Try to imitate Kingsley in a passage describing a sultry day in August.*

EXERCISE 7

The phoenix was a bird fabled to burn itself on a pyre and rise renewed from its own ashes. The following description is taken from a famous medieval book, 'The Voyages of Sir John Mandeville'. Sir John claimed to have travelled in the East for thirty years, but his book has proved to be largely a compilation from the works of other writers. It is none the less interesting to us; and its popularity in his day is attested by the fact that it ranked next to the Scriptures.

The Foul is clept Fenix; and ther is non but on in alle the World. And he commethe to brenne him self upon the Awtere of the Temple at the ende of 5 Hundred Yeer: for so longe he lyveth. And at the 500 Yeres ende, the Prestes arrayen here Awtere honestly, and putten there upon Spices and Sulphur vif and other thinges, that wolen brenne lightly. And than the Brid Fenix commethe, and brennethe him self to ashes. And the first Day next aftre, Men fynden in the Ashes a Worm; and the secunde Day next aftre, Men finden a Brid quyk and perfyt; and the thridde Day next aftre he fleethe his wey.

In his further description of the bird Mandeville is indebted to Pliny for the facts about its yellow neck, blue beak, purple wings, and yellow and red tail.

- (i) *First of all, modernize the passage.*
- (ii) *Look up the meaning of metathesis and pick out examples from the passage.*

- (iii) *What is the symbolic meaning of the phoenix?*
 (iv) *Do you think this an effective opening for a poem on the phoenix?*

O blest unfabled Incense Tree,
 That burns in glorious Araby,
 With red scent chalicing the air,
 Till earth-life grow Elysian there!

Half buried to her flaming breast
 In this bright tree, she makes her nest,
 Hundred-sunned Phoenix! when she must
 Crumble at length to hoary dust!

Her gorgeous death-bed! Her rich pyre
 Burnt up with aromatic fire!
 Her urn, sight high from spoiler men!
 Her birthplace when self-born again!

The mountainless green wilds among,
 Here ends she her unechoing song!
 With amber tears and odorous sighs
 Mourned by the desert where she dies!

(GEORGE DARLEY: *The Phoenix*)

- (v) *Write a description of the death of the phoenix as you imagine the poet to have conceived it.*

EXERCISE 8

Read these two poems about spring:

O to be in England
 Now that April's there,
 And whoever wakes in England
 Sees, some morning, unaware,
 That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
 Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
 While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
 In England—now!

And after April, when May follows,
 And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows !
 Hark, where my blossom'd pear-tree in the hedge
 Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
 Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge
 That's the wise thrush ; he sings each song twice over,
 Lest you should think he never could recapture
 The first fine careless rapture !
 And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
 All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
 The buttercups, the little children's dower
 —Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower.

(BROWNING : *Home-thoughts from Abroad*)

THE MAY MAGNIFICAT

May is Mary's month, and I
 Muse at that and wonder why :
 Her feasts follow reason,
 Dated due to season—

Candlemas, Lady Day ;
 But the Lady Month, May,
 Why fasten that upon her,
 With a feasting in her honour ?

Is it only its being brighter
 Than the most are must delight her ?
 Is it opportunist
 And flowers finds soonest ?

Ask of her, the mighty mother :
 Her reply puts this other
 Question: What is Spring ?—
 Growth in every thing—

Flesh and fleece, fur and feather,
 Grass and greenworld all together ;
 Star-eyed strawberry-breasted
 Throstle above her nested

Cluster of bugle blue eggs thin
 Forms and warms the life within ;
 And bird and blossom swell
 In sod or sheath or shell.

All things rising, all things sizing
 Mary sees, sympathising
 With that world of good,
 Nature's motherhood. . . .

Their magnifying of each its kind
 With delight calls to mind
 How she did in her stored
 Magnify the Lord.

Well but there was more than this :
 Spring's universal bliss
 Much, had much to say
 To offering Mary May.

When drop-of-blood-and-foam-dapple
 Bloom lights the orchard-apple
 And thicket and thorp are merry
 With silver-surfed cherry

And azuring-over greybell makes
 Wood banks and brakes wash wet like lakes
 And magic cuckoocall
 Caps, clears, and clinches all—

This ecstasy all through mothering earth
 Tells Mary her mirth till Christ's birth
 To remember and exultation
 In God who was her salvation.

(GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS)

- (i) Contrast the thoughts of the two poets.
- (ii) Which poem seems the more difficult? Why?
- (iii) Explain carefully the meaning of strawberry-breasted, bugle blue, drop-of-blood-and-foam-dapple bloom, thorp, silver-surfed, azuring-over greybell, caps, clears and clinches all.
- (iv) Write a descriptive passage entitled 'May-day'.

CHAPTER XI

A LITTLE LIGHT RELIEF

‘MEN have been wise,’ said Dr. Johnson, ‘in very different modes, but they have always laughed the same way.’ The doctor was nothing if not argumentative and he often made sweeping statements. This would appear to be one of them ; for what makes one person laugh may have no effect on another. *Punch* affords many proofs of this ; so do the pages of jokes from foreign publications that you will find in magazines like the *Passing Show*. It is often difficult to see the point of some of the jokes, the reason being that people of different temperaments and different nationalities seem to be amused in different ways. Not only do East and West wear their smile with a difference : German or French readers may laugh heartily at jests by which we are not amused. Moreover, a person’s readiness to be amused may depend on the age in which he lives. Topical matters, for example, will raise a laugh at the time, but the joke will be meaningless to a later age.

Another point to notice is that the appreciation of a jest will often depend on mental alertness. A slow-witted person will fail to see the point of a remark based on word-play. For instance, in one of H. H. Munro’s stories two characters speak as follows about a friend known to both of them :

‘She’s leaving her present house and going to Lower Seymour Street.’

‘I dare say she will, if she stays there long enough,’ I said.

For the appreciation of another joke it is perhaps necessary to know a Latin quotation. This is true of one of the best puns on record. It occurs in a Victorian burlesque by William Brough, entitled *The Field of the Cloth of Gold*. Henry VIII has had a bad crossing from Dover to Calais. His courtiers try to cheer him up, but he replies :

Yesterday all was fair, a glorious Sunday,
But this sick transit spoils the glory o' Monday.

Again, unless you know something of social conditions in the eighteenth century, you will not fully relish Lord Chesterfield's repartee. On a rainy day he met a bully. Said the latter, 'I never give the wall to a scoundrel.' 'I always do,' said Lord Chesterfield, stepping to one side.

On the other hand, there are certain incidents that appear to amuse any one at any time. No doubt one cave-man laughed when he saw another cave-man aim with his stone hammer at a marrow-bone and hit his thumb ; just as we laugh when Charlie Chaplin, in *Modern Times*, dives importantly from a dilapidated jetty into a foot of water. Such incidents cause amusement because of some physical oddity : an action results in some unexpected shock to the person concerned and the bystander, either from a sense of superiority or because what happened was so unexpected, laughs aloud.

Johnson was therefore partly right when he said that 'men have been wise in very different modes, but they have always laughed the same way'. We all laugh heartily when Tony Lumpkin overturns Mrs. Hardcastle in the horse-pond at the bottom of the garden : some may not move a muscle after reading Oscar Wilde's quip about 'one of those characteristic British faces that, once seen, are never remembered'. In other words, Johnson's remark seems to be applicable to humour, but not to wit.

EXERCISE I

With the help of the Oxford English Dictionary write a concise account of the derivation of the word humour and its subsequent

history : illustrate your account by what you consider to be good examples of humour.

EXERCISE 2

On what does each of the following depend for its effect ? Word your answer carefully :

(a) *A solemn and somewhat pretentious witness had just remarked that he had been 'wedded to the truth from infancy'. 'And how long have you been a widower?' Mr. Justice Darling inquired.*

(b) *Eminent General, in a whisper, to another equally distinguished, on leaving the tomb of the Venerable Bede : 'But I always thought Adam Bede was a woman!'*

(c) *A city man on holiday in the country was amused to watch a farmer feeding his pigs on apples in a unique way : each animal was tied to the end of a long pole and then hoisted up to the required bough. At length the city man was irritated, and unable to bear it any longer he went up to the farmer. 'That's a funny way to feed pigs on apples : it's very inefficient. Don't you realize that it wastes a lot of time?' 'Yes, I know,' replied the farmer, 'but what's time to a pig?'*

(d) *Teacher : 'What is an abstract noun?'*

Pupil : 'The name of something which you know does not exist. For example, virtue.'

(e) *'Physiology, besides being costly and useless, is an immodest subject. When the Author of the Universe hid the liver of man out of sight He did not want frail human creatures to see how He had done it.'*

(Evidence given before a Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1879, in an inquiry concerning extravagant expenditure by a London School Board.)

(f) *A life-sized bust of John Wesley stands in the vestry of Bishop Burton Church. It was originally in the Wesleyan chapel but in 1895 was placed in a sale held in aid of the renovation of the chapel. The Vicar bought it for £2, and jokingly told his Wesleyan friends that they had sold their leader for forty pieces of silver. The bust was of elm-wood, and the Vicar, finding it badly worm-eaten, sent it to a firm of cabinet-makers for treatment.*

The foreman soaked the bust in paraffin for a month and sent it back as good as new. He entered this item on his time-sheet : ' To re-baptizing John Wesley and curing him of worms, 25s.'

(g) *Mr. James Agate told a story against himself at a theatrical dinner. He once had the opportunity of a chat alone with Miss Lilian Braithwaite. ' My dear lady,' he said, ' may I tell you something I have wanted to tell you for years, that you are the second most beautiful woman in the United Kingdom?' Mr. Agate naturally expected Miss Braithwaite to ask who surpassed her, and he was ready with a name. But Miss Braithwaite merely looked at Mr. Agate with a charming smile and said, ' Thank you : I shall always cherish that as coming from the second best dramatic critic.'*

(h) *Friend, to owner of newly bought horse : ' Named him yet ? '*

Owner : ' Yes : Once Bitten.'

Friend : ' Why that ? '

Owner : ' Because he twice shied ! '

(i) *At one of his levees Louis XIV was unable to free himself from an importunate general. At length the King cried out, ' That gentleman is the most troublesome officer in the whole army.' ' Your Majesty's enemies have said the same thing more than once,' replied the general.*

EXERCISE 3

Study these passages :

(a) *I came with the Wolf walking between Houthulst and Elverdynge. There saw we go a red mare, and she had a black colt or a foal of four months old which was good and fat. Isegrim was almost storven for hunger, and prayed me go to the Mare and wit of her if she would sell her foal. I ran fast to the Mare and asked that of her. She said she would sell it for money. I demanded of her how she would sell it. She said, ' It is written on my hinder foot. If ye can read and be a clerk ye may come see and read it.'*

Then wist I well where she would be, and I said, ' Nay, for sooth, I cannot read. And also I desire not to buy your child. Isegrim hath sent me hither, and would fain know the price thereof.' The Mare said, ' Let him come then himself, and I

shall let him have knowledge.' I said, 'I shall : ' and hastily went to Isegrim, and said, 'Uncle, will you eat your bellyful of this colt, so go fast to the Mare for she tarrieth after you. She hath do write the price of her colt under her foot. She would that I should have read it, but I can not one letter, which me sore repenteth for I went never to school. Eme, will ye buy that colt? Can ye read, so may ye buy it.'

'Oh, nephew, that can I well. What should me let? I can well French, Latin, English, and Dutch. I have gone to school at Oxenford. . . . I will go to her, and shall anon understand the price,' and he bade me to tarry for him, and he ran to the Mare, and asked her how she would sell her foal or keep it. She said, 'The sum of the money standeth written after on my foot.' He said, 'Let me read it.' She said, 'Do,' and lifte up her foot, which was new shod with iron and six strong nails; and she smote him, without missing, on his head, that he fell down as he had been dead. A man should well have ridden a mile ere he arose. The Mare trotted away with her colt, and she left Isegrim lying shrewdly hurt and wounded. He lay and bled, and howled as an hound. I went then to him and said, 'Sir Isegrim, dear Eme, how is it now with you? Have you eaten yenowh of the colt? Is your belly full? Why give ye me no part? I did your errand. Have slept ye your dinner? I pray you tell me, what was written under the mare's foot? What was it, prose or rhyme, metre or verse? I would fain know it. I trow it was *cantum*, for I heard you sing, me thought, from fear; for ye were so wise that no man could read it better then ye.'

(CAXTON : *History of Reynard the Fox*)

Eme : uncle.

(b) (N.B.—Lazaro is the servant of a blind man, who has recently beaten him severely for stealing one of his sausages.)

When night did approach, the rain continuing still, he cried unto me, Lazaro, this rain is without end, for the more that night draweth on, the more earnest it is : let us draw homeward to our lodging. But as it chanced, we had between us and home a great wide gutter which the rain had made, wherefore I said, Uncle, this gutter is very broad and swift, so that we shall have much ado to pass; notwithstanding I have now espied one narrow place, where we may well leap over dryfoot. He thought verily then, that I had given him good and friendly counsel,

and therefore said, my good boy, now I perceive thou art wise. I must needs love thee : therefore I pray thee lead me to the narrowest place, where I may best escape, for now in winter it is not good to take water, especially to go wetshod. How glad I was then to see the time which long before I had wished for, wherefore without delay I brought him from underneath the portals and led him right against a great pillar of stone which stood in the market place, and then said, uncle this is the very narrowest place of all the gutter.

Then straightways, by reason of the great rain that fell upon him, and also because of his great haste to be under covert, and chiefly for that God himself had at that time so blinded his understanding, to give me good time of revengement, he gave full credit to my words and said, Lazaro, let me see now how thou canst set me where I must take my jump, and then leap thou over on God's name. I did so, for when I had taught him his place I leaped as far as I could and took standing behind the post, as one that had watched the reencounter of a Bull, and then I said, now uncle leape boldly as far as you possibly can, for else you may chance wet yourself. I had not so soon said the word, but that incontinently the poor blind man was ready to take his race, returning a pace or two back from the standing, and so with great force took his leap, throwing forward his body like a buck, that at the last his head took such a monstrous blow against the cruel stony pillar, that his head sounded withal as it had been a leather bottle, whereupon he fell back with his cloven pate, half dead : then gave I a leap and said, how now uncle, could you smell the sausage so well and not the pillar, I pray you? Prove now a little what you can do. So I left him there between the hands of many men that came in all haste to help him and took my ready way straight towards the town end with no slow pace.

(DAVID ROWLAND'S translation of *Lazarillo de Tormes*)

- (i) *In what particulars do these extracts resemble each other?*
- (ii) *Which do you think is the earlier? Why?*
- (iii) *Is there a moral to the stories? Do you think a moral spoils a story?*
- (iv) *Mention some famous stories in which animals play a prominent part. What must a writer of such stories be careful to observe?*

(v) *Look up the meaning of picaresque, and try to find out something about picaresque literature.*

EXERCISE 4

Hawser Trunnion, a retired commodore, is an important character in Smollett's 'Peregrine Pickle'. Trunnion's language and mode of life were nautical; and when he died his devoted companion, Lieutenant Hatchway, composed this epitaph, which was inscribed in golden letters on a marble monument:

Here lies,
 Foundered in a fathom and half,
 The shell
 Of
 Hawser Trunnion, Esq.
 Formerly commander of a squadron
 In His Majesty's service,
 Who broached to, at five P.M. Oct. x.
 In the year of his age
 Threescore and nineteen.

He kept his guns always loaded,
 And his tackle ready manned,
 And never showed his poop to the enemy,
 Except when he took her in tow;
 But,
 His shot being expended,
 His match burnt out,
 And his upper works decayed,
 He was sunk
 By Death's superior weight of metal.
 Nevertheless,
 He will be weighed again
 At the Great Day,
 His rigging refitted,
 And his timbers repaired,
 And, with one broadside,
 Make his adversary
 Strike in his turn.

- (i) *Do you think this is amusing or not? Give reasons.*
 (ii) *Have you come across any amusing epitaphs in churchyards? This, for example, is to be found in the New Forest :*

Him shall never come again to we,
 But us shall surely one do go to he.

- (iii) *Reword Smollett's epitaph seriously.*
 (iv) *Give the literal meaning of epitaph and cenotaph.*

EXERCISE 5

Compare these extracts :

(a) (N.B.—Parson Adams, hearing a woman's shrieks, hurried to her assistance, in time to save her from a powerful assailant.)
 Lifting up his crab-stick, he immediately levelled a blow at the ravisher's head where, according to the opinion of the ancients, the brains of some persons are deposited, and which he had undoubtedly let forth, had not Nature (who, as wise men have observed, equips all creatures with what is most expedient for them) taken a provident care (as she always doth with those she intends for encounters) to make this part of the head three times as thick as those of ordinary men who are designed to exercise talents which are vulgarly called rational, and for whom, as brains are necessary, she is obliged to leave some room for them in the cavity of the skull ; whereas, those ingredients being entirely useless to persons of the heroic calling, she hath an opportunity of thickening the bone, so as to make it less subject to any impression, or liable to be cracked or broken ; and indeed, in some who are predestined to the command of armies and empires, she is supposed sometimes to make that part perfectly solid.

(FIELDING : *Adventures of Joseph Andrews*)

(b) (N.B.—The Duke referred to is the Duke of Newcastle.)
 Captain C—— entered into conversation with us in the most familiar manner, and treated the Duke's character without any ceremony. ' This wiseacre (said he) is still a-bed ; and, I think, the best thing he can do is to sleep on till Christmas ; for, when he gets up, he does nothing but expose his own folly. . . . In the beginning of the war, this poor half-witted creature told me, in a great fright, that thirty thousand French had marched from

Acadia to Cape Breton. 'Where did they find transports?' said I. 'Transports (cried he)! I tell you they marched by land!' 'By land to the island of Cape Breton!' 'What! is Cape Breton an island?' 'Certainly.' 'Hah! are you sure of that?' When I pointed it out in the map, he examined it earnestly with his spectacles; then taking me in his arms, 'My dear C—— (cried he)! you always bring us good news. Egad! I'll go directly, and tell the king that Cape Breton is an island.'

(SMOLLETT: *Humphrey Clinker*)

(i) Which of the two do you consider to be the more amusing? Why?

(ii) Do the authors make use of sarcasm, irony or innuendo?

(iii) Comment on some of the punctuation in (b).

(iv) Write a letter to 'The Times' from General Brayneless about 'that fellow Fielding' or 'that scoundrel Smollett'.

EXERCISE 6

Look up the meaning of satire and then study the following passage from 'Absalom and Achitophel', in which Dryden is attacking two of his literary enemies. Doeg is the poet Settle, and Og is Shadwell:

Doeg, though without knowing how or why,
Made still a blund'ring kind of melody;
Spurr'd boldly on and dash'd through thick and thin,
Through Sense and Non-sense, never out nor in;
Free from all meaning, whether good or bad,
And in one word, heroically mad . . .
Let him be gallows-free by my consent,
And nothing suffer since he nothing meant.
Let him rail on, let his invective muse
Find four and twenty letters to abuse,
Which if he jumbles to one line of sense
Indict him of a capital offence . . .

Og, from a Treason tavern rolling home.
Round as a globe, and liquored every chink,
Goodly and great he sails behind his link;
With all his bulk there's nothing lost in Og,
For ev'ry inch that is not Fool is Rogue . . .

The midwife laid her hand on his thick skull
 With this prophetic blessing—Be thou dull . . .
 A double noose thou on thy neck dost pull,
 For writing treason and for writing dull ;
 To die for faction is a common evil,
 But to be hang'd for nonsense is the devil.
 I will not rake the dunghill of thy crimes,
 For who would read thy life that reads thy rhymes?
 But of King David's foes be this the Doom,
 May all be like the young man Absalom ;
 And for my foes may this their blessing be,
 To talk like Doeg and to write like thee.

- (i) *Is Dryden's laughter good-natured? Give reasons.*
- (ii) *Does humour add to the effectiveness of attack? If so, why?*
- (iii) *What are the best lines in these extracts?*
- (iv) *Saintsbury, talking of Dryden's couplets, refers to the 'inimitable ring, as of a great bronze coin thrown down on marble'. What do you think he means?*

EXERCISE 7

The following is an extract from Sterne's 'Sentimental Journey' :

I was going one evening to Martini's concert at Milan, and was just entering the door of the hall, when the Marquesina de F—— was coming out in a sort of hurry—she was almost upon me before I saw her ; so I gave a spring to one side to let her pass—she had done the same, and on the same side too ; so we ran our heads together. She instantly got to the other side to get out : I was just as unfortunate as she had been ; for I had sprung to that side, and opposed her passage again. We both flew together to the other side, and then back—and so on—it was ridiculous ; we both blushed intolerably ; so I did at last the thing I should have done at first—I stood stock still, and the Marquesina had no more difficulty. I had no power to go into the room till I had made her so much reparation as to wait and follow her with my eye to the end of the passage. She looked back twice, and walked along it rather sideways, as if she would make room for anyone coming upstairs to pass her. 'No,' said I, 'that's a vile translation : the Marquesina has a right to the best apology I can make her ; and that opening is

left for me to do it in'—so I ran and begged pardon for the embarrassment I had given her, saying, it was my intention to have made her way. She answered, she was guided by the same intention towards me—so we reciprocally thanked each other. She was at the top of the stairs ; and seeing no *cicisbeo* near her, I begged to hand her to her coach. So we went down the stairs, stopping at every third step to talk of the concert and the adventure.

'Upon my word, Madame,' said I, when I had handed her in, 'I made six different efforts to let you go out.'

'And I made six efforts,' replied she, 'to let you enter.'

'I wish to heaven you would make a seventh,' said I.

'With all my heart,' said she, making room.

Life is too short to be long about the forms of it—so I instantly stepped in, and she carried me home with her. And what became of the concert, St. Cecilia—who, I suppose, was at it, knows more than I.

(i) *Do you think Sterne has a light or heavy touch? Explain why.*

(ii) *Who was St. Cecilia? What famous poem is there about her?*

(iii) *In another place Sterne tells how he lost his passport and lived for some time in fear of the Bastille. A soliloquy on the subject as he stepped into the courtyard of his inn was interrupted by what he took to be a child complaining that it 'could not get out'. Seeing no one about, Sterne paid no further attention but went out.*

Using these details, write a passage in imitation of Sterne's style :

On my return through passage, heard same words repeated ; looking up saw starling in little cage ; ' *I can't get out—I can't get out* ' ; stood looking at bird ; to every person coming through passage it said same thing, fluttering up to side of cage nearest approaching person ; ' *God help thee,* ' said I, ' *but I'll let thee out, cost what it will* ' ; tried to get to the door of cage ; twisted so fast with wire that only pulling cage to pieces would avail ; took both hands to it ; bird flew to where I was trying to free him ; thrust head through trellis, pressed breast against it, seemed impatient. I told starling I feared I could not free him.

'No,' said the starling. 'I can't get out—I can't get out,' said the starling.

(N.B.—Sterne's actual words are italicized. You may use them.)

EXERCISE 8

Read this third leader from the 'Daily Telegraph':

SLAP-STICK OR CUSTARD-PIE?

When magistrates talk, as magistrates will from time to time, about the demoralizing influence of the films, let us remember that these have another side; that they can strengthen, as well as undermine, the foundations of society.

As thus. A confectioner's shop in Boston, Mass., was recently visited by a man who, wielding a beer-bottle in the manner of a club, called on the proprietress to hand over the contents of the till. She, falling into the spirit of the thing, answered the beer-bottle with her largest custard-pie, which she slapped into the face of the malefactor. He, covered with confusion and custard, fled; only to be taken into—dare I say it?—custody.

The whole episode, of course, belongs to that region of film-land in which Mr. Chaplin obtained his first laurels, and which, I believe, still has its eager public. Had that lady never witnessed a custard-pie comedy she would have thought herself helpless, and the underworld of Boston would have celebrated another triumph.

The way of the transgressor is hard; especially when the pies of the victim are soft.

E. C. B.

- (i) *What is a third leader, and what is it usually about?*
(ii) *Find an amusing third leader in some recent edition of the 'Daily Telegraph' or 'The Times'.*

(iii) *Write a short article in the same vein on the following subject: motorist in new car stopped by police who wish to test his brakes: motorist told to proceed ahead of police car, accelerate to thirty miles an hour and keep to that speed until he hears police gong; is then to stop as quickly as possible: motorist does as he is told; on hearing gong stops within few yards; police car crashes into the back of his; motorist disgusted, goes home by tram and leaves police to deal with wreckage.*

EXERCISE 9

You have probably enjoyed a story by Jacobs or Wodehouse or some other humorous writer. Imagine that a reviewer has written a scathing criticism of it. Write a suitable reply.

EXERCISE 10

Some words have various meanings. For example, drill may mean a boring tool, exercise, seed-sowing machine, coarse twilled fabric, and so on. Such a word is bull, one of its meanings being a certain kind of statement. From the following examples of a bull give a definition of it:

(a) Some friends were talking together and mention was made of a nobleman's wife. One man said it was a pity she had no children. A medical man present remarked that it was indeed a misfortune, but he had noticed that it was hereditary in some families.

(b) An Englishman, writing a letter in a coffee-house, was annoyed by an Irishman who persisted in looking over his shoulder. The Englishman ended his letter with these words: 'I would say more, but a d—— tall Irishman is reading over my shoulder every word I write.' 'You lie, you scoundrel,' said the self-convicted Hibernian.

EXERCISE 11

The pronunciation of English words is notoriously difficult. You may have heard of the Frenchman who, having learnt how to pronounce bought and bough, thought he was getting on well. Then he saw on a hoarding 'Russian Ballet—Pronounced Success', and shot himself.

Place names are especially difficult, as the following will show:

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

(Inspired by 'Broadcast English: Being Recommendations to Announcers Regarding the Pronunciation of Some English Place Names: Collected and Transcribed for the B.B.C. Advisory Committee on Spoken English by A. Lloyd James.')

Sing, Polyhymnia, the praise of those
Who as Advisory Committee chose

The right pronunciation for each name
 Of town or thorp elusive ; and to the same
 Oft gave a variant, whereby to distinguish
 Pure microphonic from our dialect English.
 No more announcers err, who lately groped
 Their way through vowels and consonants, and hoped
 By slur judicious or calm hazardry
 To escape the censure of the B.B.C.
 Teach me, O Muse, my own hard words to scan,
 What Lloyd James is, to feel, and know myself his Fan.

Now to our task. Know first there is a comely
 Place to be found in Cheshire we call Cholmondeley.
 Fair Devonshire to those well skilled in mappery
 Reveals a mill that all save boors call Clapworthy.
 Next comes a Cornish town the ear to intrigue
 With sound all unexpected—'tis called Breage.
 But Derby county of its natives liege
 Demands that all refer to pretty Heage.
 A Northants. town, among so many spots
 Homonymous, is exclusive ; for while Notts.,
 Oxford, Staffs., Yorks., Leicest., Lancs., Lincs., Hants., Cumb.,
 naught on

Earth can persuade to deviate from Broughton,
 Its namesake (nigh to Kettering) has no doubt on
 The subject and maintains it is called Broughton.
 If a man roams in Huntingdon he meets
 A knotty problem in the name St. Neots.
 Of foison dialectal Herts. a lap's worth
 Provides in one long place name, thanks to Sawbridgeworth.
 Continue your pronunciatory revels
 Till Gloucestershire delights you with St. Briavels.
 From there to Yorkshire, where Miss Lilian Braithwaite
 Can claim to own a name that rhymes with Slaithwaite.
 'What's that?' says one : 'All nonsense ! I can show it
 Is in no other way pronounced than Slaithwaite.'
 Another cries : 'What rot ! I here avow it
 Must never be pronounced as aught save Slaithwaite.'
 'Fool !' says a third, 'my fiat only hath weight,
 For all good Yorkshiremen pronounce it Slaithwaite.'
 I falter where I firmly trod. Enough am
 I puzzled now to boggle over Ulgham.

My brain reels : I must hence : yet whither, say,
 Am I to go for help? Not Idridgehay
 Is like to ease me of my doubt ; nor may soon
 A gleam of comfort gladden me at Greysouthen.
 All hope foregone, I shall in future days bury
 My head in silent shame at far-off Wyrardisbury.
 Perhaps in sadness think what might have been
 Amid the whispering trees of Cliffords Mesne ;
 Or bare my burning brow to cooling rains
 Along the slopes (in Lancs.) of Worsley Mesnes.
 From county on to county ever crossly
 The Fates shall harass me. No peace at Trottiscliffe.
 If, ever hoping, I go west, I ween
 My fever will abate no jot at Treryn :
 Go further, north to Worcestershire ; yet who
 Can hope to cure me when I reach St. Cloud ?
 Distraught I'll wander south by every runnel
 And field of meadowsweet near pretty Puncknowle.
 Then refuge seek with some kind-hearted farmer
 In cooler regions at a place called Quernmore ;
 And all too soon seek out some spot in warmer
 Clime when I learn I ought to call it Quernmore.
 I'll burn my books ; then wish that I had kep' 'em
 To help me find out how I should say Meopham.
 All to no good : I'll find myself in deep em-
 broilment when for a change I go to Deopham.

Perplexed, bewildered, I shall seek some weaver
 Of spells to cure me when I stay at Belvoir.
 Too late. For now my mind to pieces goes,
 Unable to distinguish verse from prose :
 Until divine inspiration guides me to page 24, and without a
 moment's delay I pack my bag, take a train to Devonshire and
 decide to live for ever and ever at a little place that is
 spelt BISHOPSNYMPTON and is pronounced BISHOPSNYMPTON—at
 least you only have to omit the second P.

*With the aid of 'Broadcast English II' find out the pro-
 nunciation of the following :*

*Alnwick, Beaulieu, Cirencester, Daventry, Ebbw Vale, Fowey,
 Gotham, Herstmonceux, Lympne, Norham, Potter Heigham,
 Romney, Ruislip, Sedbergh, Shrewsbury, Steyning, Teign, Tyne-
 mouth, Wrekin, Wycombe.*

CHAPTER XII

THE FASCINATION OF FEAR

FEAR is a primitive instinct which centuries of civilization have not weakened. It is true that we no longer worship fire or interpret the phenomena of storm and tempest as the expression of a god's anger ; but let the cry ' Fire ! ' be raised or a violent thunderstorm break out, and we may all show signs of fear. If we think of this for a moment, we find that death is at the bottom of our fear.

Early poetry is full of references to death ; and although an heroic death in battle was considered the only fitting end of a warrior's life, even the warrior was apprehensive of what happened after. Achilles, for instance, complained to Odysseus, who visited him in the underworld, that it was better to be a peasant in the land of the living than a prince among the dead. To check such gloomy thoughts our Norse ancestors pictured an after life of fighting and feasting for those who died in battle ; but there still awaited those who died a ' straw death ' a hapless existence in the land of mists. Christianity dispelled such fears ; yet early religious poetry tends to be sombre when the subject of death appears. The poets were apt to concentrate rather on the pains of dissolution than the pleasures of heaven. Even in a later age you will find William Dunbar, in his *Lament for the Makers* (i.e. poets), expressing his fear of death's persistency. These are the opening stanzas of the poem :

I that in heill was and gladness
Am trublit now with great sickness
And feblit with infirmitie :—

Timor Mortis conturbat me.

Our plesance here is all vain glory,
This fals world is but transitory,
The flesh is bruckle, the Feynd is slee :—

Timor Mortis conturbat me.

The state of men does change and vary,
Now sound, now sick, now blyth, now sary,
Now dansand mirry, now like to die :—

Timor Mortis conturbat me.

No state in Erd here standis sicker ;
As with the wynd wavis the wicker
So wannis this world's vanitie ;—

Timor Mortis conturbat me.

(Heill : health. Bruckle : frail. Slee : sly. Sicker : sure.
Wicker : willow. Wannis : wanes.)

Yet man eventually turns most things to some account, and it is interesting to note how soon writers begin to make artistic use of grim themes. The night monster Grendel, in the Beowulf story, is one of the early examples in English literature ; and as the medieval period extends we find a growing interest in themes to startle readers. Hence the popularity of the dance of death, and the rise of the ghost story. Lingering superstition maintained the interest in black magic, in which Shakespeare's contemporaries believed profoundly. Perhaps the best-known story centred on this theme is that of Faust's bargain with the devil. Later and more sceptical ages were not above reading the Gothic romances of the so-called Terror School ; while the cult of realism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been responsible for many gruesome descriptions calculated to shock squeamish readers.

Let us see how some writers deal with grim themes.

EXERCISE I

Compare these passages :

(a) (N.B.—The Duke of Gloucester has helped King Lear to escape from his cruel daughters. Gloucester, pinioned to a chair, is being cross-questioned.)

Cornwall. Where hast thou sent the king?

Gloucester.

To Dover.

Regan. Wherefore to Dover? Wast thou not charged at peril—

Cornwall. Wherefore to Dover? Let him first answer that.

Gloucester. I am tied to the stake, and I must stand the course.

Regan. Wherefore to Dover?

Gloucester. Because I would not see thy cruel nails
Pluck out his poor old eyes ; nor thy fierce sister
In his anointed flesh stick boarish fangs.
The sea, with such a storm as his bare head
In hell-black night endured, would have buoy'd up
And quenched the stelled fires ;
Yet, poor old heart, he help the heavens to rain.
If wolves had at thy gate howl'd that stern time,
Thou shouldst have said, ' Good porter, turn the key,'
All cruels else subscribed : but I shall see
The winged vengeance overtake such children.

Cornwall. See't shalt thou never.—Fellows, hold the chair.—
Upon these eyes of thine I'll set my foot.

Gloucester. He that will think to live till he be old,
Give me some help !—O cruel ! O you gods !

Regan. One side will mock another ; the other too.

Cornwall. If you see vengeance,—

First Servant.

Hold your hand, my lord :
I have served you since I was a child ;
But better service have I never done you
Than now to bid you hold.

Regan. How now, you dog !

First Servant. If you did wear a beard upon your chin,
I'd shake it on this quarrel. What do you mean?

Cornwall. My villain ! (*They draw and fight.*)

First Servant. Nay, then, come on, and take the chance of anger.

Regan. Give me thy sword.—A peasant stand up thus !

(*Takes a sword and runs at him behind.*)

First Servant. O, I am slain ! My lord, you have one eye left To see some mischief on him.—O ! (*Dies.*)

Cornwall. Lest it see more, prevent it.—Out, vile jelly ! Where is thy lustre now ?

Gloucester. All dark and comfortless . . .

Regan. Go thrust him out at gates, and let him smell His way to Dover.

(b) Two days ago I went into the King's Bath, by the advice of our friend Ch——, in order to clear the strainer of the skin, for the benefit of a free perspiration ; and the first object that saluted my eye was a child, full of scrofulous ulcers, carried in the arms of one of the guides, under the very noses of the bathers. I was so shocked at the sight, that I retired immediately with indignation and disgust.—Suppose the matter of those ulcers, floating in the water, comes in contact with my skin, when the pores are all open, I would ask you what must be the consequence ?—Good heavens, the very thought makes my blood run cold ! We know not what sores may be running into the waters while we are bathing, and what sort of matter we may thus imbibe ; the king's evil, the scurvy and the cancer ; and no doubt, the heat will render the virus the more volatile and penetrating. I am now as much afraid of drinking as of bathing ; for, after a long conversation with the doctor, about the construction of the pump and the cistern, it is very far from being clear with me that the patients in the pump-room don't swallow the scourings of the bathers. In order to avoid this filthy composition, I had recourse to the spring that supplies the private baths on the Abbey Green ; but I at once perceived something extraordinary in the taste and smell ; and, upon enquiry, I find that the Roman baths in this quarter were found covered by an old burying ground belonging to the abbey, through which, in all probability, the water drains in its passage ; so that, as we drink the decoction of living bodies at the pump-room, we swallow the strainings of rotten bones and carcasses at the private bath—I vow to God the very idea turns my stomach.

(SMOLLETT : *Humphrey Clinker*)

(c) (In the early part of this story we read that Fleete, when drunk, insulted the Indian god Hanuman. From behind the image there ran out a Silver Man, face-less, naked and white from years of leprosy. He made a mark on Fleete's breast ; and in the ensuing hours a horrible change came over Fleete.

He demanded underdone meat, his presence terrified the horses, and towards evening he was found on all fours among the bushes.)

‘Come in,’ said Strickland sternly. ‘Come in at once.’

Fleete came, and when the lamps were brought, we saw that he was literally plastered with dirt from head to foot. He must have been rolling in the garden. He shrank from the light and went to his room. His eyes were horrible to look at. There was a green light behind them, not in them, if you understand, and the man’s lower lip hung down.

Strickland said, ‘There is going to be trouble—big trouble—to-night. Don’t change your riding-things.’

We waited and waited for Fleete’s reappearance, and ordered dinner in the meantime. We could hear him moving about his own room, but there was no light there. Presently from the room came the long-drawn howl of a wolf.

People write and talk lightly of blood running cold and hair standing up, and things of that kind. Both sensations are too horrible to be trifled with. My heart stopped as though a knife had been driven through it, and Strickland turned as white as the tablecloth.

The howl was repeated, and was answered by another howl far across the fields.

That set the gilded roof on the horror. Strickland dashed into Fleete’s room. I followed, and we saw Fleete getting out of the window. He made beast-noises in the back of his throat. He could not answer us when we shouted at him. He spat.

I don’t quite remember what followed, but I think Strickland must have stunned him with the long boot-jack, or else I could never have been able to sit on his chest. Fleete could not speak, he could only snarl, and his snarls were those of a wolf, not of a man. The human spirit must have been giving way all day and have died out with the twilight. We were dealing with a beast that had once been Fleete.

The affair was beyond any human and rational experience. I tried to say ‘Hydrophobia’, but the word wouldn’t come, because I knew that I was lying.

(KIPLING : *The Mark of the Beast*)

(d) The policeman made a vigorous thrust at the crazy door ; and just as it burst open, and the light of his lantern streamed into the horrible den, a heavy splash was heard outside.

‘He has fallen into the ditch !’

‘He’ll be drowned, then, as sure as he’s a born man,’ shouted one of the crowd behind.

We rushed out on the balcony. The light of the policeman’s lantern glared over the ghastly scene—along the double row of miserable house-backs, which lined the sides of the open tidal ditch—over strange rambling jetties, and balconies, and sleeping-sheds, which hung on rotting piles over the black waters, with phosphorescent scraps of rotten fish gleaming and twinkling out of the dark hollows, like devilish grave-lights—over bubbles of poisonous gas, and bloated carcasses of dogs, and lumps of offal, floating on the stagnant olive-green hell-broth—over the slow sullen rows of oily ripple which were dying away into the darkness far beyond, sending up, as they stirred, hot breaths of miasma—the only sign that a spark of humanity, after years of foul life, had quenched itself at last in that foul death. I almost fancied that I could see the haggard face staring up at me through the slimy water ; but no, it was as opaque as stone.

(KINGSLEY : *Alton Locke*)

- (i) Which do you think is the most effective passage? Why?
- (ii) What are the limits to realistic description?
- (iii) Is the dramatist bound by stricter limits than the novelist? If so, why?
- (iv) Are gruesome details ever likely to raise a smile? Give examples.
- (v) Do grim descriptions make effective propaganda?
- (vi) Give a short account of any grim story you have read. For what reasons would you say it was good or bad?

EXERCISE 2

Nobody could tell a gruesome tale more effectively than Edgar Allan Poe. A characteristic one is entitled ‘Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar’. The narrator, who was interested in mesmerism, wished to prove by experiment whether it could affect a person on the point of dying, or arrest the process of dissolution. M. Valdemar was in an advanced state of consumption and agreed to submit to the proposed experiment. So just before it appeared that death was inevitable, he was mesmerized. Movements and a few remarks were elicited at times, the climax being the statement,

'I have been sleeping—and now—now—I am dead.' The body was kept in a trance for seven months, when it was decided to waken the patient. After certain treatment a hideous voice was heard requesting to be put to sleep or wakened: *'For God's sake!—quick!—quick!—put me to sleep—or quick!—waken me!—quick!—I say to you that I am dead!'*

We have seen, in Chapter VIII, that style depends on the choice of words and the order of words. Notice what happens when one attempts to finish Poe's story in colloquial style:

I was absolutely scared, and for a tick didn't know what to do. At first I tried to soothe the old boy down; but not having a bit of will-power left I tried another tack and set about waking him. Here I soon saw it would be all right—at least I thought it would be O.K.—and I'm dead certain that the folk in the room expected to see the chappie waken.

What did actually happen I bet nobody could have twigged.

As I quickly did the mesmerizing business, with sounds of *'Dead! dead!'* positively popping from the tongue, not from the old boy's lips mark you, his whole body—inside a minute or less—sort of contracted, went to bits, positively slithered away in my hands. Believe it or not, on that bed, staring us all in the face was a messy pool of beastly, ghastly, decayed stuff.

The essential facts are there, but the wording is so ineffective as to be ludicrous. No one would shudder at a story told in that manner; yet as Poe words the ending, it leaves a vivid impression on the reader. Suggest a suitable version and then compare it with the original.

EXERCISE 3

There is an interesting book entitled *'The Days of Dickens'*, by Mr. Arthur L. Hayward. It contains a Chapter of Horrors, which throws a lurid light on the *'good old days'*. Especially horrible were the conditions in some churchyards; and Mr. Hayward illustrates this scandalous neglect on the part of the sanitary authorities by quoting from a police report and from Dickens's *'Bleak House'*:

(a) Upon the retirement of some persons who had witnessed the interment of a friend, the grave-digger dragged from behind

a tomb-stone part of a mutilated body (from the hips downward) to the grave, which had a few minutes previously received its tenant, and thrust it in with great violence, with a covering ; he then descended into the grave, which was about twelve feet deep, and dismembered the limbs with a spade, and placed them beside the coffin, over which he sprinkled a small quantity of earth. This grave has been left open for upwards of three weeks for the reception of bodies, having only a slight covering of earth and boards. There are workshops in the immediate vicinity of this burial-ground, in which upwards of 100 persons are employed, who suffer from the effluvium arising from this abominable receptacle for decaying mortality.

(INSPECTOR OF THE FLEET STREET POLICE STATION, reporting on incident in St. Ann's Churchyard, Blackfriars, Aug. 30, 1849)

(b) A hemmed-in church-yard, pestiferous and obscene, whence malignant diseases are communicated to the bodies of our dear brothers who have not departed ; while our dear brothers and sisters who hang about official backstairs—would to Heaven they *had* departed—are very complacent and agreeable. Into a beastly scrap of ground which a Turk would reject as a savage abomination, and a Caffre would shudder at, they bring our dear brother here departed to receive Christian burial.

With houses looking on, on every side, save where a reeking little tunnel of a court gives access to the iron gate—with every villainy of life in action close on death, and every poisonous element of death in action close on life—here they lower our dear brother down a foot or two : here, sow him in corruption, to be raised in corruption : an avenging ghost at many a sick bedside : a shameful testimony to future ages, how civilization and barbarism walked this boastful island together.

Come night, come darkness, for you cannot come too soon, or stay too long, by such a place as this ! Come, straggling lights into the windows of the ugly houses ; and you who do iniquity therein, do it at least with this dread scene shut out. Come, flame of gas, burning so sullenly above the iron gate, on which the poisoned air deposits its witch-ointment slimy to the touch ! It is well that you should call to every passer-by, ' Look here ! '

And when Lady Dedlock came to see the resting-place of the man whom she loved so well :

' He was put there,' says Jo, holding to the bars and looking in.

' Where ? O, what a scene of horror ! '

'There !' says Jo, pointing. 'Over yinder. Among them piles of bones, and close to that there kitchen winder ! They put him wery nigh the top. They was obliged to stamp upon it to git it in. I could unkiver it for you, with my broom, if the gate was open. That's why they locks it, I s'pose,' giving it a shake. 'It's always locked. Look at the rat !' cries Jo, excited. 'Hi ! Look ! There he goes ! Ho ! Into the ground !'

(i) *Apart from the obvious difference in length, in what way are the passages unlike each other ?*

(ii) *What figure of speech is conspicuous in Dickens's first two paragraphs ? What other figures of speech does he use ? Explain carefully the reference to official backstairs and raised in corruption.*

(iii) *Dickens frequently attacked social abuses. Give some examples. Is a novelist justified in doing this sort of thing ? Find out whether it has ever led to the remedying of an evil.*

(iv) *Look up some facts about the Victorian period and then write a short article entitled 'The Good Old Days'.*

EXERCISE 4

In 'Ghost Stories of an Antiquary', by Dr. M. R. James, there is one about a sceptical Cambridge don named Parkins, who found a curious whistle on the Norfolk coast. When blown, this whistle conjured up 'a vision of a wide, dark expanse at night, with a fresh wind blowing, and in the midst a lonely figure'. At the same time a gust of wind arose. During the night Parkins was troubled with a development of the previous picture : on a long stretch of shore, intersected by groynes, in the fading light appeared a man clambering over the groynes and looking eagerly back ; as he approached he seemed terribly frightened and at his last gasp. Then there appeared an ill-defined figure in fluttering draperies, moving erratically but with startling swoops after his victim. Next morning the bedclothes on a second bed in Parkins's room were found tumbled about ; and during the day a boy, passing the hotel at which Parkins was staying, was terrified by the appearance of a horrible white figure at the window of what proved to be the room occupied by Parkins. The climax came that night, as follows :

The reader will hardly, perhaps, imagine how dreadful it was to him to see a figure suddenly sit up in what he had known was an empty bed. He was out of his own bed in one bound, and made a dash towards the window, where lay his only weapon, the stick with which he had propped his screen. This was, as it turned out, the worst thing he could have done, because the personage in the empty bed, with a sudden smooth motion, slipped from the bed and took up a position, with outspread arms, between the two beds, and in front of the door. Parkins watched it in horrid perplexity. Somehow, the idea of getting past it and escaping through the door was intolerable to him ; he could not have borne—he didn't know why—to touch it ; and as for its touching him he would sooner dash himself through the window than have that happen. It stood for a moment in a band of dark shadow, and he had not seen what its face was like. Now it began to move, in a stooping posture, and all at once the spectator realized, with some horror and some relief, that it must be blind, for it seemed to feel about it with its muffled arms in a groping and random fashion. Turning half away from him, it became suddenly conscious of the bed he had just left, and darted towards it, and bent and felt over the pillows in a way which made Parkins shudder as he had never in his life thought it possible. In a very few moments it seemed to know that the bed was empty, and then, moving forward into the area of light and facing the window, it showed for the first time what manner of thing it was.

Parkins, who very much dislikes being questioned about it, did once describe something of it in my hearing, and I gather—that what he chiefly remembers about it is a horrible, an intensely horrible, face of *crumpled linen*. What expression he read upon it he could not or would not tell, but that the fear of it went nigh to maddening him is certain.

But he was not at leisure to watch it for long. With formidable quickness it moved into the middle of the room, and, as it groped and waved, one corner of its draperies swept across Parkins's face. He could not, though he knew how perilous a sound was—he could not keep back a cry of disgust, and this gave the searcher an instant clue. It leapt towards him upon the instant, and the next moment he was half-way through the window backwards, uttering cry upon cry at the utmost pitch of his voice, and the linen face was thrust close into his own. At this, almost the last possible second, deliverance came, as

you will have guessed : the Colonel burst the door open, and was just in time to see the dreadful group at the window. When he reached the figures only one was left. Parkins sank forward into the room in a faint, and before him on the floor lay a tumbled heap of bed-clothes.

(Oh, Whistle, and I'll Come to You, My Lad)

- (i) How does Dr. James obtain his effects in this passage?
- (ii) Are you sufficiently interested to feel inquisitive about the early part of the story? If so, why?
- (iii) What do you consider to be the essential features of a good ghost story?
- (iv) Summarize and comment upon a ghost story you have read.

EXERCISE 5

Is darkness an important setting for a ghost story? Read 'The Turn of the Screw', by Henry James, and comment on it. If that story is unobtainable, comment on a story by Defoe entitled, 'The True Relation of the Apparition of Mrs. Veal'.

EXERCISE 6

Compare an old-fashioned ghost story with one out of 'A Ghostly Company', by H. R. Wakefield.

EXERCISE 7

The following is an extract from 'Chrononhotonthologos', by Henry Carey : the king has just killed his cook and struck his general :

Bombardinion. A blow ! Shall Bombardinion take a blow ?
Blush ! blush, thou sun. Start back thou rapid ocean !
Hills ! Vales ! Seas ! Mountains ! All commixing crumble,
And into chaos pulverize the world ;
For Bombardinion has received a blow,
And Chrononhotonthologos shall die. *(Draws.)*

King. What means the traitor ?

Bombardinion. Traitor in thy teeth !
Thus I defy thee !

(They fight—he kills the king.)

Ha ! what have I done ?

Go, call a coach, and let a coach be called ;

And let the man that calls it be the caller ;

And in his calling, let him nothing call

But coach ! coach ! coach ! Oh, for a coach, ye gods !

(Exit raving. Returns with a Doctor)

Bombardinion. How fares your majesty ?

Doctor. My lord, he's dead.

Bombardinion. Ha ! Dead ! Impossible ! It cannot be !

I'd not believe it though himself should swear it.

Go, join his body to his soul again,

Or, by this light, thy soul shall quit thy body.

Doctor. My lord, he's far beyond the power of physic.
His soul has left his body and this world.

Bombardinion. Then go to t'other world and fetch it back.

(Kills him.)

And if I find thou triflest with me there,

I'll chase thy shade through myriads of orbs,

And drive thee far beyond the verge of nature.

Ha !—Call'st thou, Chrononhotonthologos ?

I come ! your faithful Bombardinion comes !

He comes in worlds unknown to make new wars,

And gain thee empires num'rous as the stars.

(Kills himself.)

(Enter Queen, Aldiborontiphoscophornio and others.)

Aldiborontiphoscophornio. O horrid ! horrible ! and horrid'st
horror !

Our King ! our General ! our Cook ! our Doctor !

All dead ! stone dead ! irrevocably dead !

O——h ! *(All groan—a tragedy groan.)*

(i) *How soon did you realize that this is a burlesque ?*

(ii) *At what kind of play is Carey poking fun ?*

(iii) *Find out something about heroic drama.*

(iv) *Read Fielding's 'Tom Thumb', or Sheridan's 'The Critic' and then write a short article on 'Tragedy—Its Use and Abuse'.*

EXERCISE 8

In Chapter VIII there occurs a quotation from Schiller : ' The artist may be known rather by what he omits.' Apply this to ghost stories and others of a similar kind,

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